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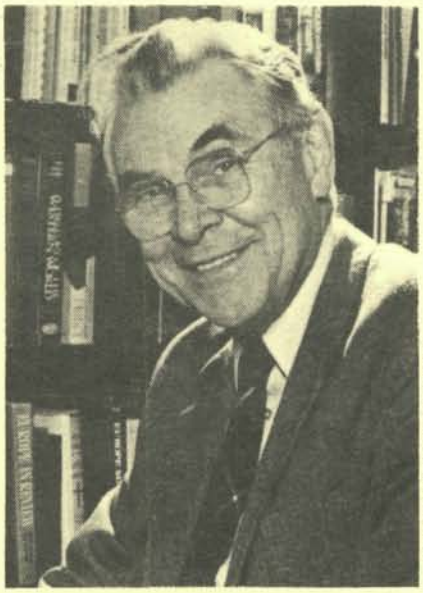

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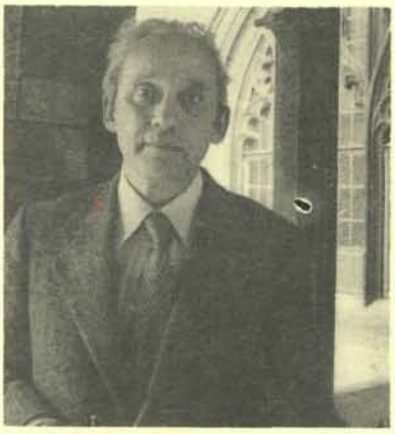

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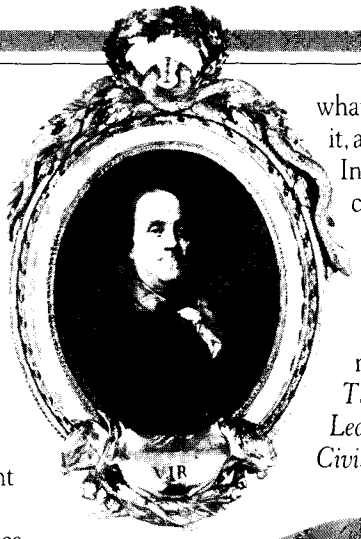

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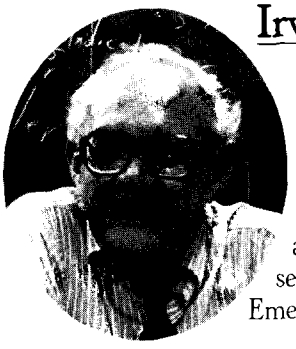

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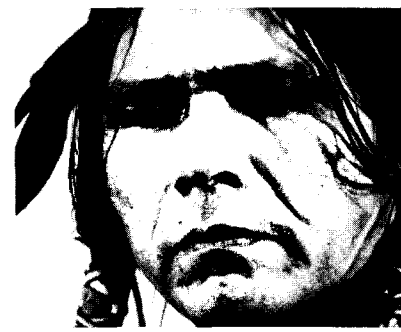

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They Said You Was High-Class

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"Look, I know it's a dodgy topic, but you are lower class, aren't you, darling? Just between ourselves, naturally."

"I was before I came up in the world, true, but lower-middle class, not working class. Very important distinction. My old dad got really wild if you said he was working-class. Worse than calling him a Jew."

—Kingsley Amis
Stanley and the Women

Karl, Friedrich, forgive me, fellas, for never having taken much interest in your class struggle, but the truth is that for the better part of my life I have been a bit unclear about what class I myself belong to. If the phrase didn't imply that I was of a higher social class than I am—and make me sound like an Englishman into the bargain—I should call the whole thing a frightful muddle. More than a mite confusing it is, though. How nice to be able to say with confidence, as George Orwell once did, that one is "lower-upper-middle class." Yet, unless I am quite wrong, such terms have now lost much of their descriptive power. The social pace has quickened; nowadays people move in and out of social classes with greater rapidity than ever before. Sometimes I wonder if today social class, at least as we used to think of it in this country, has about as much relevance as an electric salad fork and as bright a future as a cha-cha instructor in Montana.

Social mobility—the jumping or more commonly sliding from one class to another—is scarcely a new phenomenon. Chekhov, to cite an interesting instance, had a grandfather who bought himself out of serfdom and a nephew who became a Hollywood producer. I myself have a cousin, ten years older than I, named Moe and a niece, thirty years younger than I, named Nicole; and to go from Moe to Nicole in only forty years is in some respects to travel further than the Chekhovs did from Voronezh Province to Beverly Hills. Other evidence of our whirring social flux can readily be adduced. The janitor of the apartment building I live in has published a book; it is not, granted, a slender little volume on the poetry of the Comte Robert de Montesquiou but instead a book about the martial arts; yet the same man is a janitor and a published author. The other day, in Manhattan, I had the bite put on me by a panhandler wearing a rumpled but still a real Ralph Lauren shirt; and it occurred to me shortly afterward that, should I ever hit the skids, I may not have the wardrobe to go on the bum. Just when you begin to think you understand a thing or two about the drama of life, they change the scenery and send in a whole new cast of characters.

Cracks, major fault lines, in the class system may be a worldwide phenomenon. Peregrine Worsthorne, the British political writer, recently noted in *The Spectator* that "the class system has changed out of all recognition in my lifetime." Certainly, social distinctions in

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America have become vastly less clear in my own. When does a child first notice such distinctions? My own first realization that the world was a place filled with social differences might have been the gross recognition that some people lived rather better than we and others rather worse. It might have been the woman, whose name was Emma, who came in to clean for us on Tuesdays, for I seem to recall thinking it peculiar that someone would clean a place not her own. It might have had to do with automobiles, for we lived on a street that was a thoroughfare, and the first organized knowledge I acquired as a child had to do with telling the difference between cars; and it could not have been long before I also learned that some cars (Cadillacs, Packards, Lincolns) were held in higher regard than others (Fords, Studebakers, Plymouths). These were the years of World War II, during which my father drove a green 1942 Dodge sedan.

If our family had a crest, that green 1942 Dodge sedan ought to be at its center. That car placed us—socially, financially, and stylistically—and where it placed us was slam-bang in the middle. Our family was not so much socially uninteresting as socially uninterested. If life is in some sense a status race, my parents never noticed the flag drop. While we owned possessions roughly comparable to those owned by our neighbors, we showed no passion for the subtleties of social life. Even when the money was there to do so, it would never have occurred to my parents to join a city club or country club or to move to a fashionable address—a residence with social resonance. Their notion of the good life was to live comfortably, always well within their means, and insofar as possible never to pay for pretension. Then as now that seems to me quite sensible—though I must add, I myself have not had the character to live up to it.

I have omitted a social fact of no small significance and even greater complication. The fact is that I am Jewish. I was born thus, and thus I shall remain; and it is exceedingly difficult to be Jewish and not have a somewhat heightened sense of social and class distinctions. Not for nothing was the keenest modern observer of such distinctions, Marcel Proust, half-Jewish and fully homosexual; after all, a man who is in danger of being despised from two different directions learns to devise sensitive antennae. Another sharp observer of social gradations, Anton Chekhov, was neither Jewish nor homosexual; but he was low-born, the son of a bankrupt grocer, the grandson of a serf, and that put the antennae permanently on his roof. In a famous letter to his friend and publisher, Alexey Suvorin, Chekhov explained his own social unease when he wrote that "what aristocratic writers take from nature gratis, the less privileged must pay for with their youth," adding that he had had to squeeze "the slave out of himself drop by drop" before "he finds that the blood coursing through his veins is no longer the blood of a slave, but that of a real human being."

Let me hasten to insert that I never for a moment felt the least like a slave. Doubtless this was in large part owing to having a father who was successful yet in no way tyrannical or crushing, on the model, say, of Papa Kafka. My father, along with giving me the reassuring sense that I was working with a net under me, encouraged me to believe that I came of a family capable of serious achievement. But my father also alerted me early to the alarming fact that people might detest me for reasons having nothing to do with my character or conduct and everything to do with my religion. I must have been four or five years old when the potential social consequences of being Jewish were thus impinged upon me. In the 1940s and early 1950s the word—the euphemism, really—for de facto anti-Semitic arrangements was "restricted"; and in those years many neighborhoods and suburbs, clubs and resorts, fraternities and sororities were restricted.

I would be a liar if I said that knowledge of such things didn't bother me. But I would be an even greater liar if I said that it bothered me very much. When I was growing up, we lived in neighborhoods that tended to be at least 50 percent Jewish, and the same was true of the public schools I attended. If anything, this encouraged me in the belief that Jews were rather superior—a belief based, unknowingly, on social class. What I didn't know was that the non-Jews who remained in the neighborhoods we lived in were mainly people who for one reason or another were probably unable to depart them. In other words, most of the non-Jews I went to grade school and high school with were the sons and

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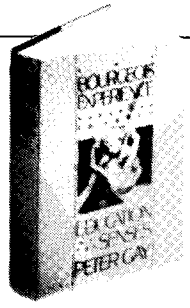

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daughters of the working class or the lower white-collar classes, while the Jews tended to be among the newly surging middle classes, still very much on the make.

Although so far as I know I have never been the victim of any serious anti-Semitic acts, the first time I recall feeling rather out of the social mainstream because I was Jewish was during a year I spent as a freshman student at the University of Illinois in the middle 1950s. Illinois was very much a school of fraternities and sororities—a "Greek campus," as it was called—and I, who had not yet developed socially to the point of knowing there was something in the world called non-conformity, accepted an invitation to join what was thought to be the best of the Jewish fraternities. (All non-Jewish fraternities and sororities at Illinois were then "restricted.") The reigning spirit at the University in those days, far from being the Jewish and metropolitan one I was used to, was Protestant and small-town —a middle western, somewhat more yokelish version of the muscular Christianity that George Santayana found several decades earlier prevailing at Yale. The student who seemed to me best to represent this spirit was a young man from Peoria named Hiles Stout. Stout was a Sigma Chi and played three major sports for the University and resembled e. e. cummings's conscientious objector Olaf only in being "more brave than me:more blond than you"—though perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he was "more Hiles than me:more Stout than you."

I did not so much feel out-classed or declassed at the University of Illinois as I felt myself on the outside of a house I had no particular desire to enter. For while attending the University of Illinois, I had informally enrolled at good old Mencken-Lewis-Dreiser University, where I learned a haughty if not especially original disdain for the middle class, that inartistic and uninspired group also known as the booboisie—that is to say, a disdain for the social class and culture from which, apart from being Jewish, I myself had derived. From M.L.D.U., beloved alma mater, I learned not to join the class struggle but instead to disassociate myself, insofar as possible, from my own class.

As a step in that direction, I transferred to the University of Chicago, which was perhaps as close as I have ever come to living in a classless society—I refer to the student segment of university society—and rather closer than I ever again care to come. A few fraternities remained at the University of Chicago at that time, but far from being thought in any way admirable, the chief attitude toward them was a mixture of mild contempt and apathy. Wealth and genteel birth counted for naught at the University of Chicago; apart from books and classical records, material possessions were thought the sign of a cramped spirit. Physical beauty and social graces were held to be beside the point, and the standard joke of the day had it that a panty raid on one of the women's dormitories netted a fatigue jacket and a single combat boot. A passionate bohemianism was what the University of Chicago student body aspired to; a grim scruffiness was what it often achieved.

Intellectually, the University of Chicago strove much higher, holding four tasks in life to be worthwhile: to be an artist, to be a scientist, to be a statesman, or to be a teacher of artists, scientists, or statesmen. In this regard the University of Chicago was not anti-middle class in the abrasive manner of Sinclair Lewis and H. L. Mencken; it was para-middle class by its tacit implication that there were higher things in life than getting a good job, earning a living, raising a family, and getting on. Chamfort once said that society was divided between those who had more dinners than appetite and those who had more appetite than dinners, but at the University of Chicago the division was between those who loved art and learning and those who did not, and those who loved it were thought better.

If the University of Chicago was relatively free of conventional social-class considerations, the United States Army, the institution in which I was to spend the next two years of my life, was, at least formally, as class-bound as any society I have ever lived in. The first—and chief—class distinction was the patent one between officers and enlisted men. Officers ate, slept, dressed, and were paid better. Obeisance needed to be paid them in the form of salutes and in addressing them as "sir." Theirs was a strikingly better deal; one didn't have to be Alexis de Tocqueville to notice that. As an enlisted man who as a boy was never required to learn the habits of obeisance, I could not help marveling at the vast social discrepancies between officers and en-

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listed men. I did not so much resent them as wonder how career non-commissioned officers managed to tolerate them, especially in a peacetime army, when an officer's responsibilities were less and the call on his bravery non-existent. Confronted for the first time with a codified class system, I found myself more of a democrat than I had imagined.

At the same time that the U.S. Army was rigidly hierarchical and held together by the idea of rank, no American institution was, at its core, more democratic. Well in advance of the larger society of which it was a part, the U.S. Army had integrated its facilities and was color-blind in its promotions and other procedures. As an enlisted man, one was really thrown into the stew of American life. In my own basic-training platoon I lived with Missouri farmers, Appalachian miners, an American Indian auto mechanic, a black car salesman from Detroit, a Jewish lawyer from Chicago, a fundamentalist high-school teacher from Kansas, and others no less varied but now lost to memory. It felt, at moments, like living in a badly directed screen version of *Leaves of Grass*. Although I groaned and cursed, questioning the heavens for putting me through the torture in tedium that I then took my time in the Army to be, I have since come to view that time as one of the most interesting interludes in my life—among other reasons because it jerked me free, if only for a few years, from the social classes in which I have otherwise spent nearly all my days. It jerked everyone free from his social class, however high or low that class may have been, and yet somehow, despite the jolt, it seemed to work.

Or at least it seemed to work most of the time. A case where it didn't was that of Samuel Schuyler III, whom I worked with as a fellow enlisted man in the Public Information Office at Fort Hood, Texas. The Third, as I always thought of him, had gone to the Wharton School of Business, hungered for the country-club ease he was missing while in the Army, and drove a black Cadillac convertible, the current year's model. Despite the numeral affixed to his name, the Third was without social pretensions; he was a simple hedonist and a straight money man. How he had come to own that Cadillac convertible at the age of twenty-three I never discovered—my own social-class manners, I now suppose, prevented me from asking—but he played the stock market fairly often, calling his broker in Pittsburgh to place his orders.

What was not difficult to discover was the Third's contempt for everyone around him, officers and enlisted men both. (Only a few acquaintances, of whom for some reason I was one, were spared.) Forms through which to express this contempt were not wanting to him. The Third had developed a salute that, while formally correct, made every officer to whom he tendered it think at least twice about it; there was about this salute the faint yet almost unmistakable suggestion that its recipient go forth to exercise an anatomical impossibility upon himself. Driving on the post in his black Cadillac, the Third was everywhere taken for the post commander—who himself drove a more modest car, a Buick—and everyone, even up to the rank of bird colonel, dropped everything to salute him, only to receive in turn the Third's own extraordinary salute. The Third even dressed with contempt. If there is a word that is the antonym of *panache*, I should avail myself of it to describe the deliberately slovenly way that he wore his uniform. In mufti, meanwhile, no muted Ivy League dresser, the Third preferred draped trousers, alligator shoes, and in shirts showed an unfortunate penchant for the color known as dubonnet. Toward the close of his enlistment, the Third was promoted from Pfc to Sp4c. but refused the promotion on the grounds that the additional money wasn't worth the trouble of sewing new patches on his uniforms. No gesture better summed up his refusal to partake of military class arrangements; he scoffed at them every chance he got, making clear that, short of doing anything that could land him in the stockade, he chose not to play the game. His lofty contempt earned him a great deal of not-so-lofty hatred. The Third knew he was hated and felt about this much as he did about his promotion—he could not, that is, have cared less.

I cared rather more, in the Army and elsewhere, because social class has always seemed to me intrinsically fascinating. I have inevitably been interested in attempting to take the measure of any class system in which I found myself, though when young I must often have been, as Henry James might have put it, destitute of the materials requisite for

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measurement. A fantasy about social class said to be common among children, especially children fed ample rations of fairy tales, is that one's parents are not one's real parents but instead that one is much higher born—and is probably, as will surely one day be revealed, a prince or princess. My fantasy, taken up in early adolescence and not quite dropped to this day, is that I can roam freely from social class to social class, comfortable everywhere and everywhere welcome. Sometimes I think it would be more realistic to believe that one is the last of the Romanovs.

Not that I am a proletarian-fancier, the American equivalent of a Narodnik or a Slavophile. There is something inherently condescending in assigning special qualities to the lower class. Dorothy Parker, after being told that Clare Boothe Luce was always kind to her inferiors, is supposed to have asked, "And where does she find them?" But I like to view myself as being able to slip from class to class because I detest the notion of one's destiny being absolutely determined by birth and social upbringing; I readily grant the importance of both but not their decisiveness. I myself dislike being labeled too easily, being understood too quickly. Neither a strict Marxist nor a straight Freudian be—such is the advice of this old Polonius; accept the possibility of all influences, reject the fiats of all absolute determinants.

The old, received wisdom about social class is that one is supposed to dislike the class just below one's own and gaze yearningly upon those above one's own. But I find that the only class whose members can sometimes get me worked up are the upper classes, or what is left of them after taxes and the Zeitgeist have done their work. A plummy upper-class English accent with nothing behind it but enormous self-satisfaction can, in the proper mood, still bring out the residual Red in me. My Anglophilia, which may have had behind it a certain social-class longing, seems to have slipped badly in recent years; today, apart from being somewhat regretful about not having gone to an Oxbridge college when a boy, I have only one regret about not being English, which is that, because I am not, I cannot be permitted to use the word "whilst" without seeming affected. The upper class of my own country now seems to me, when it is not sad, mostly comic. The traditional WASP-ocracy seems to have left the field without firing a shot; they resemble nothing so much as white Russians, with the serious proviso that they appear to have been forced into exile without actually leaving their own country. One reads about them nowadays at play in Newport or in Charleston, or in repose at the Somerset Club in Boston, or sees them decked out for a photographer from *Town & Country*, but they seem rather desiccated and plain tuckered out.

It is a bit difficult to have a serious class system when, as in this country at present, you don't have a convincing upper class. So long as there is a convincing upper class, other classes in the society at least know what to imitate, however absurd the imitation. I can attest to this when I recall that, in 1950, as a boy of thirteen growing up in a middle-class, mostly Jewish neighborhood, I and several of my pals attended a class in ballroom dancing called "Fortnightly." It was held at the field house of a public park, was taught by a couple of very correct posture and general deportment whom I now think would be best described as "shabby genteel," and, despite the name Fortnightly, met every Saturday afternoon. What we did in this class was, in effect, prepare for a cotillion none of us would ever attend. Young ladies sat on one side of the room, young gentlemen on the other; young gentlemen crossed the room to ask young ladies to dance, and to dance waltzes, foxtrots, and other, rather intricate dances and steps that this young gentleman, aging fast, has still never had to press into service.

The decisive moment in the defeat of upper-class, capital-S Society may have come when, in newspapers all over the nation, what used to be called the Society page was replaced by the Style section. The old Society page, with its accounts of engagements and weddings, charity balls and coming-out parties, tended to be boring and silly; while the new Style section, with its accounts of designer clothing, gourmandizing, and the trend of the moment, tends to be lively and silly. The Society page, like Society itself, began to go under sometime in the middle 1960s, which was not exactly a felicitous time for establishments of many kinds. Not that the sixties did away with class consciousness; it attempted instead to reorient such consciousness in favor of other classes. The animus of

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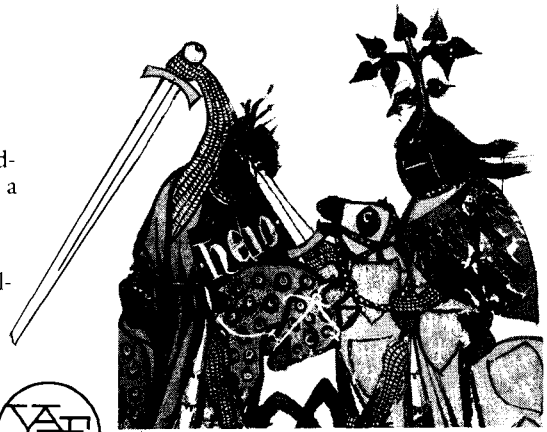

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the sixties generation, expressed in its popular culture, was against both upper- and middle-class life. In their place it wished to substitute ethnic pride and, as expressed by such groups as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, something of a working-class ethos, with sexual freedom and drug use added. Even in England, that most traditional of class-bound countries, according to the English journalist Jilly Cooper, "working-class became beautiful and everyone from Princess Anne downwards spat the plums out of their mouths, embraced the flat 'a' and talked with a working-class accent."

Not many people outside of it are likely to have been sorry to see the old upper class in this country pushed rudely to the sidelines. The upper class had a lot to apologize for, and in many ways it is still apologizing. In wealthy Fairfield County, Connecticut, in the town of Darien (the setting for Laura Hobson's novel about genteel anti-Semitism, *Gentleman's Agreement*), a local newspaper, according to the *New York Times*, ran an article by a high-school girl attacking the town for its lack of social diversity. "I am," this girl wrote, "a white Protestant living in a basically white Protestant community. I lack the richness and cultural background gained from a diversified environment. What are you, the townspeople, going to do about it?" Few things so lower the morale, and raise the gorge, as being lectured to by one's own children. One of these things may be being lectured to on the same grounds by the clergymen of one's church, and no church in America has gone at this task more relentlessly than the Episcopalian Church, once *the* church of the old upper classes if there is truth in the one-sentence sociology of religion that holds: A Methodist is a Baptist with shoes, a Presbyterian is a Methodist who has gone to college, and an Episcopalian is a Presbyterian living off his investments.

Although much that was once thought to represent upper-class life appears to have been routed, much more lives on, often in attenuated and snobbish form. Contemned the old upper class may be, yet the line of people hopefully awaiting their children's enrollment in such formerly exclusively upper-class prep schools as Choate, Groton, Exeter, and St. Paul's has not, my guess is, in any serious way diminished. Most middle-class students who have a wide choice will tend to choose universities favored by the old upper classes; and most university professors, given a similar choice in institutions, will do the same—a tenured professor who has left Princeton for Purdue, or Harvard for Hofstra, or Yale for Ypsilanti Community College is a fit candidate for the television show called "That's Incredible."

Freud said that it was better to be an ancestor, which he turns out to have been, than to have ancestors, which he lacked. But surely better still is both to be an ancestor and to have ancestors. In literary life I can think of at least three living writers whose careers owe more than a little to upper-class cachet: Gore Vidal, who at every opportunity brings his family connections into his writing; William F. Buckley, who attempts to live like an aristocrat, though without much in the way of aristocratic leisure; and George Plimpton, whose many autobiographical books on the subject of sports have about them something of the aura of slumming. (I do not count Louis Auchincloss, a novelist whose subject is often the eclipse of the upper class in which he grew up.) All three men are, in accent, neither chummy nor unplummy.

If he were still alive, I should most certainly count in Robert Lowell, whose ancestors were reputed to speak only to God and who, before his death, was generally conceded to be this country's first poet. Without for a moment claiming that Lowell set out to exploit his upper-class genealogy, neither can one for another moment disclaim the importance of that genealogy to Lowell's poetry. Elizabeth Bishop once told Lowell: "All you have to do is put down the names! And the fact that it seems significant, illustrative, American, etc., gives you, I think, the confidence you display about tackling any idea or theme, *seriously*, in both writing and conversation. In some ways you are the luckiest poet I know." Was Elizabeth Bishop correct? Let us change some of those names she claimed Lowell had only to mention. What if Lowell's poem "My Last Afternoon with Uncle Devereux Winslow" were instead entitled "My Last Afternoon with Uncle Morris Shapiro," or his "Terminal Days at Beverly Farms" were instead entitled "Terminal Days at Grossinger's"? (Actually, given that resort's famously rich provender, any day at Grossinger's could be terminal.) Not quite the same, perhaps you will agree.

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But then neither is anti-Semitism in the United States quite the same as it once was, or else I could not make the kind of easy joke that I just did about the titles of Robert Lowell's poems, at least not in print. Whether anti-Semitism is today less, whether racism has greatly diminished, cannot be known with certainty; my sense is that they both are much reduced. But what can be known is that neither is any longer officially recognized in restricted or segregated arrangements, and this, along with marking impressive progress, has made for significant changes in the American class system. Whereas the retreat of the old upper class has blown the roof off the system, the demise of official and quasi-official discrimination has uprooted the basement. The metaphor I seem to be building toward here is a class system that resembles an open-air ranch house. Strange edifice, this, but then socially many strange things appear to have taken place in recent years. In many industries union wages have placed many union workers, financially at least, into the upper reaches of the middle class, while attending college, once the ultimate rite of passage into solid middle-class respectability, no longer inevitably accomplishes this task—owing doubtless to the spread and watering down of higher education. There is a great deal of senseless and haphazard luxury in the land. Athletes and rock stars, many of them made millionaires before they are thirty, are removed from the financial wars for all their days. Meanwhile a servant class has all but disappeared. A daughter of the working class uses part of her wages from working at the supermarket to buy designer jeans, while a son of Scarsdale comes into Manhattan to acquire his duds at a Salvation Army thrift shop. The other day, in a parking lot near where I live, I noted a rather dingy Saab automobile, with an antenna for a telephone on its roof, an Oberlin College decal on its back window, and bumper stickers reading "National Computer Camp" and "I Support Greenpeace." Now there is a vehicle with a lot of class—and, symbolic of our time, a lot of class confusions.

If that car isn't owned by someone from what today passes for the upper-middle class, I'll buy you a salmon mousse and a manual on how your children can raise their SAT scores fully thirty points. "The upper-middle classes," writes Jilly Cooper, "are the most intelligent and highly educated of all the classes, and therefore the silliest and most sensitive to every new trend: radical chic, health food, ethnic clothes, bra-lessness, gifted children, French cooking." The members of the upper-middle class that Miss Cooper has in mind are mostly newly risen and, not always sure where they are, insecure about where they are headed. This upper-middle class is not to be confused with the nouveau riche. The former tends to be rather better educated, immensely concerned with what it understands to be good taste, and serious if also a little worried about culture—very little that one could think of, in fact, would be more wounding to members of this upper-middle class than to be taken for nouveau riche. I think I know what I am talking about here; this upper-middle class is my milieu—or, as the writer Josephine Herbst used to call it, my "maloo."

When I say that the upper-middle class is my maloo, I do not mean that I am quite of that class. Strictly speaking, I am fairly sure that I do not qualify financially. I do not drive a BMW, a Mercedes, or a Jaguar; I do not dream of driving such cars, and if I leave the earth without owning one or the other of them, I shall not, for that reason, die with a frown on my face (I cannot otherwise promise to depart smiling). I own no works of art, nor do I aspire to own anything above the level of an unnumbered print. No espresso machine sits on the counter of my kitchen, no mousse molds sit upon the shelves of my cabinets. From the tax standpoint, I do not earn enough money now, nor do I soon expect to earn enough, to cry out, in the words of the rock 'n roll song, "Gimme shelter." Do not get me wrong. I should not in the least mind driving off in a Mercedes 380 SL, a Turner watercolor locked in its trunk, on my way to have a cappuccino with my tax lawyer. But my mind, that great wanderer, does not linger long on such things. Expensive good taste, that sine qua non of the new upper-middle class, is not my sine qua non. I do not despise it; I am not in the least uncomfortable around it; but I do not live for it.

What, then, do I live for? Apart from love for my family and friends, I live for words. I live for the delights of talking and reading and writing. I am content when talking with peo-

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ple I adore or admire or at least feel I can learn a little something from; I am happy when I am reading something fine or subtle or powerful; and I am delirious when I am writing something of which I am not altogether ashamed. If one's social class is defined, at least in part, by one's wishes, then I ought perhaps to be defined as a member of what I think of as the verbal class—someone, that is, who both earns his livelihood and derives his greatest pleasure from words. Membership in the verbal class has its advantages and its disadvantages: the hours are a bit crazy, but, like the village idiot posted at the town gates to await the arrival of the messiah, at least you are never out of work.

The term "verbal class" is meant to be almost purely descriptive; nothing, certainly, honorific is intended by it. Orwell, who did not use the term "verbal class," did once refer to "the new aristocracy" of professors, publicists, and journalists who in large part comprise the verbal class; he did so in the portion of *1984* that purports to be from Emmanuel Goldstein's manuscript, where this new aristocracy is described as "less tempted by luxury, hungrier for pure power" than their opposite numbers in past ages. In Chekhov's time, the verbal class of our day and the new aristocracy of *1984* would have been described as the intelligentsia. This is the same intelligentsia of whom Chekhov, in a letter to a friend, writes: "I have no faith in our intelligentsia; it is hypocritical, dishonest, hysterical, ill-bred, and lazy." Which made them, in Chekhov's view, quite as wretched as any other social class, though perhaps a bit worse because the pretensions of the intelligentsia were more extravagant and its complaints better formulated and more insistently expressed. Read Chekhov and, in questions of social class, one soon becomes a Chekhovian. "I have faith in individuals," he wrote. "I see salvation in individuals scattered here and there . . . be they intellectuals or peasants, for they're the ones who really matter, though they are few."

Yet my sense is that the verbal class has risen slightly in recent years. It has not done so, near as I can make out, because of any improvement in its members' general mental acuity or civic valor. The verbal class appears instead to be rising by default. Members of the verbal class, odd fish that they are, seem able to swim easily through a fluid social scene—and the American social scene at present seems extremely fluid. John Adams spoke of his studying "politics and war that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy," but what would he have thought of men who studied real estate and the stock market that their daughters may have the liberty to study Marxist historiography and their sons become, through downward mobility, carpenters in Vancouver? He would probably think his wife Abigail very clever for describing the American people as "the mobility."

"Classless Soviet Is Far Off, Siberian Scholar Says." So read a recent headline in the *New York Times*. It is difficult to doubt such authority, for surely one of the quickest ways of telling that a classless society is far off is merely to live in Siberia. My guess is that a classless society is roughly as near completion in the Soviet Union as it is in the United States—which isn't very near at all. Not that this even remotely suggests the need for intensifying the class struggle. Take it from a member of the verbal class, in a real class struggle one is lucky to end up with a draw, except that it inevitably turns out to have been a very bloody draw.

I see the serious class struggle as that of men and women singly fighting off being entirely shaped by the social class into which they were born. Insularity, unimaginativeness, self-satisfaction—each social class has its own special drawbacks, blindnesses, vices. "Vices" reminds me of a story a friend of mine, a man born into the English working class, used to tell about a shop class he was required to take at a grammar school in London. It was taught by a flinty little Scotsman who, when he wanted the class's attention in order to make an announcement, used to cry out, "Stand by your vices, boys!" When we think too exclusively as members of our social class, we all, essentially, stand by our vices. I should have thought the trick of becoming a human being is to stand away from them.

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Mexico's Children

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

I

Papi

YOU END UP MIDDLE-AGED, a writer, and a bit of a fraud. You find yourself—and you look for yourself—on a list of "the hundred most influential Hispanics." On television you are asked your opinion of bilingual education; in a newspaper you are quoted saying something about illegal immigration. You have opinions. But, in truth, what kind of expert are you—you, who so badly speak Spanish, middle-class *pocho* with "flesh-colored" frames on your glasses? A newspaper editor calls with an idea for a short essay—something about Mexican Americans, are they liberal, conservative, or what? Who are they "as a political force"? And what is their future?

Their future! They are people stalked by the past. That is what you should know about them, about us, about me. Memory would ensnare us.

Consider my father: When he decided to apply for American citizenship, my father told no one, none of his friends, those men with whom he had come to this country looking for work. American citizenship would have seemed a betrayal of Mexico, a sin against memory. One afternoon, like a man with something to hide, my father just slipped away. He went downtown to the Federal Building in Sacramento and disappeared into America.

Sacramento, California, lies on a map around five hundred miles from the ruffled skirt of Mexico. Growing up in Sacramento, I found the distance between the two countries to be farther than any map could account for. But the distance was proximate also, like the masks of comedy and tragedy that were painted over the stage of the Alhambra Theater. Mexico was sad. Mexico was my family's Catholicism of candles dripping and sorrowing Virgins. Mexico orbited through the memory of my family in bitter little globes of sorrow, rosary beads revolving through the crushing weight of my grandmother's fingers. Mexico. Mexico. My mother said that Mexico had skyscrapers. At the

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✪ RICHARD RODRIGUEZ is the author of *Hunger of Memory*, portions of which were published in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. His second book, which is about the memory of Mexico in the United States, will be published late in 1986.

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back of Sister Mary Regis's classroom, Mexico was the clay replica of an Indian pueblo. An embarrassment. My mother remembered the lyrics of Mexican folk songs; she remembered the taste of Mexican ice cream, creamier than here; she remembered walking with her sisters round the plaza at night; the warm Guadalajara nights. I trusted my father's silence. Mexico was dusty. There was no work in Mexico. Our ancestors were poor. Mexico was much older than America; Mexico was cynical. Mexico had gold teeth. My father, in some ways so much the adopted American—my father used to laugh when I'd announce my plan to become famous and rich.

Outside our door was America. America was described by close-cut lawns and high nasal voices, bubbles of "Hi" and "Okay" floating across the lawn as the *gringos* washed their cars every Saturday morning in summer.

Through the years I was growing up there, Sacramento dreamed of its own redevelopment. Plans were proposed every few months to convert "K" Street downtown into a mall and to turn a section of skid row along the river into Old Town. The Sacramento *Bee* published sketches of the carnival future—an expansive street scene—of sidewalk cafés with banners and clouds, and trees that were also clouds, and elegant ladies with their purse arms extended, pausing on sidewalks that were made of glass. A few years later, the future was built. Old Sacramento became a block of brick-front boutiques; some squat glass buildings were constructed on Capitol Avenue; and "K" Street, closed to traffic for several blocks, got a concrete fountain and benches with winos asleep in the sun.

Never mind. Never mind that the future did not always meet America's dream of itself. I was born to America, to its Protestant faith in a newborn future. I was going to be an architect and have a hand in building this country. There was only my father's smile that stood in my way.

In the 1980s, America is still a land of big dreamers. Americans abandon worn brick cities back east to start all over in the Sun Belt. Throughout the Southwest they build glass cities on the desert floor and pump them full of cold air. The newcomers are puzzled by the Mexican Americans they find when they move in. There are dark faces downtown, speaking Spanish; billboards meant for dark eyes. Every night the television dial turns to the right, passing news from Mexico City. And in that pass there is reason to wonder.

Americans wonder how Mexico figures in their future. But the only way to manage that question is to consider how the *gringo* and the Mexican have dealt with the past. Most Mexicans came to America in

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this century, well after the United States "annexed" the Southwest in the 1840s. What most Mexican Americans carry, however, what Mexico bequeaths, is the memory of the time when all the Southwest was Mexico's.

American textbooks allude to the nearly three centuries that the Southwest was held as Spanish land; then they mention the brief Mexican ownership. In a paragraph, Americans are on the move, heading west, and soon, dishonorably, the United States is at war with Mexico. America's ragtag army, mostly of Southerners, marches into monumental Mexico City. With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the balance shifts—the United States becomes the larger country.

Americans grow up not so much innocent of this history as willfully vague. Fess Parker and John Wayne heaved a heroic plaster chin on the era. "Remember the Alamo," children in the Southwest learn to say. Remembering what?

In Sacramento, parades up Broadway on the Fourth of July would enlist equestrian clubs of businessmen dressed in tight pants as Spanish dons, with their *señoritas* sidesaddle on charming palominos. The past was something that sparkled in the sun. Or the past was something preserved from the sun, dark and cool like the adobe rooms at Sutter's Fort. Or the past became "Spanish colonial," a dangling architectural conceit.

"Kiss Me, I'm Italian." "Wave, If You're Norwegian." "When you're in love, the whole world's Jewish." When the ethnic revival of the 1960s sent everyone scrambling for their native T-shirts, Mexican Americans were in earnest, applying to state legislatures and to the Congress with various bilingual proposals, some even envisioning a bicultural America. Bilingual voting ballots, bilingual driving tests, first-grade arithmetic lessons in Spanish—these became the miraculous fruits of a political season. In the 1960s, statisticians discovered Mexican Americans to be the youngest, the fastest-growing minority group. Politicians could count. What the politicians so easily granted, however, many Americans regarded as bitter. The Mexican immigrant was not playing by conventional rules. People complained: "When my parents came to this country, *they* had to learn English. . . ."

Publicly, the debate over a scheme like bilingual education became a debate over pedagogy. Each side projected its charts and produced experts with pointers to point at the charts. But bilingual education had first been proposed by political activists, not educators. Its aims were political. They had to do with the most basic transaction of pride and respect in the city.

I end up arguing with other Mexican Americans, middle-class like

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myself. As I am my father's son, I am skeptical, like Mexico; I play the heavy, which is to say I play America. We argue and argue, but not about pedagogy. We argue about desire's reach; we pull a few platitudes (being richer for having two languages; being able to go home again . . .). In the end, the argument comes down to somebody's childhood memory. "When I was in grammar school, our first-grade teacher used to hit us for speaking Spanish." Thus, spoken memory becomes a kind of shorthand for some older, other outrage, the nineteenth-century affront. The land stolen. The Mexican scorned on land he had named. Spic. Greaser. Spanish, the great metropolitan language reduced to a foreign tongue, a language of the outskirts, the language of the gibbering poor, thus gibberish; English, the triumphal, crushing metaphor.

Today's politicians, Republican and Democrat alike, have seen the wisdom of approaching Mexican-American voters with shrink-wrapped holy words like *heritage* and *pride* and *diversity*. Mexican-American political energies, meanwhile, get spent on a linguistic agenda that is beside the point. I know Mexican Americans who have lived in this country for forty or fifty years and have never applied for citizenship or gathered more than a Montgomery Ward sense of English. Their refusal, lodged between "How much?" and "Okay," is not a linguistic problem primarily.

My father says that the trouble with the bilingual voting ballot is that one ends up voting for the translator. I smile at his lack of sentimentality. I think of the bus ride he took from the past and from his friends. He fled memory. But now memory takes her revenge on the son. I long ago put away my youthful ambition to become an architect. I have become a writer. By occupation, I sit at my desk every morning and wait upon memory. My subject is Mexico.

II

A Mother's Love

She still does not know what to make of our leaving. Mexico, mad mother, has seen her children flee the violence of civil war; she has watched many more cast their lot with the new century and head north for work, for wages, north for life. Mexico has pouted, she has feigned disdain. It was bad enough that so many left, worse that so many left her for the *gringo*.

But blood is blood, or perhaps in this case, language is blood. Mexico has worried. She has seen her children lured by the *gringo*'s offer of

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work—building the railroad across the West, working the mines and the fields. During the Great Depression, as the *gringo*'s eyes slowly drained of sugar, Mexicans were rounded up and deported. In this century, Mexico has sent more immigrants to the United States than any other country, but Mexico has received more emigrants from the United States than any other country.

In the 1930s, the Ku Klux Klan burned crosses throughout the Southwest, and the Mexican was told in plain English that he need not apply. But times changed and the *gringo* smiled again. During World War II, the Mexican was officially welcomed to replace men who had gone to war. Millions of Mexicans were contracted to come as guest workers (*braceros*). This license was extended into the 1960s. By then, a path between the two countries was well-worn. Boys succeeded fathers, splitting the year between work in the United States and rest in Mexico. In the 1960s and the 1970s, hard times in Mexico made of the border a minor hurdle.

A true mother, Mexico would not distinguish among her children. Her protective concern extended not only to the Mexican nationals in this country, but to the larger number of Mexican Americans as well. In 1943, American sailors in Los Angeles ventured into an evil vein of boredom which led to the east side of town where they beat up barrio teenagers who were dressed in the burlesque punk costume of the day. The "Zoot Suit Riots" lasted for several nights. City officials fell asleep early, and the Los Angeles press encouraged the high-spirited sailors. It required the diplomatic protest of the Mexican ambassador and the consequent intervention of the American secretary of state to end the disturbances.

So Mexico watched. Mexico shrieked, sent cables of protest to Washington when she heard of the mistreatment of Mexican nationals. In a city as small as Sacramento in the 1950s, there was a Mexican consulate—a small, white building downtown, in all ways like an insurance office, except for the seal of Mexico (an eagle) over the door. For decades, at offices like this one, Mexicans would find a place of defense in America.

No wonder that Mexico would not entertain the idea of a "Mexican American" except as a fiction, a bad joke of history. Yes, she had seen Mexicans in the Southwest become, by treaty, United States citizens after the American annexation. And, yes, she had watched later generations drift away. But most Mexican Americans lived in barrios, apart from the *gringos*, and many retained Spanish as if in homage to her. We were her children in a hostile place. We were Mexicans without Mexico.

In *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Octavio Paz describes the teenage

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gang member, the *pachuco*, and, by implication, all Mexican Americans: "The *pachuco* does not want to become a Mexican again; at the same time he does not want to blend into the life of North America. His whole being is sheer negative impulse, a tangle of contradictions, an enigma."

This is Mexico talking; this is the way Mexico saw us for decades. And for decades it was true. The Mexican-American sojourn in the Southwest was the story of a people never really part of public America. An exception perhaps was New Mexico, where the proportion of Hispanics to the general population was always high. Early in this century, New Mexico elected governors, even United States senators, who were Mexican Americans. It denies none of them their effectiveness, however, to say that they remained regional leaders; none served as a national focus for Mexican-American aspirations.

"Mexicans, we have no unity," my mother would say to her four children, four pairs of attentive brown eyes, her party. We were already living in a section of Sacramento (middle-class) where there were few other Mexican Americans around, and none at school. "What a shame," she'd say, my mother, my captain. "You see the black people always united. But us—when we first came to this country, people had to warn us about the Mexicans already here. They thought they were higher up than the rest of us because they were born in this country."

Each side had a name for the other. The *cholo* was scorned for his peasant Mexican ways; the *pocho* had forgotten he was Mexican. Their conflict was economic. The newcomer was willing to work for the lowest wage. The newcomer was trying to find room in the already overcrowded barrio. The newcomer posed the greatest threat to immigrants only one rung up the ladder.

Black Americans have suffered relentless segregation and mistreatment, but blacks have been implicated in the public life of this country from the beginning. Oceans separated the black slave from any possibility of rescue or restoration. From the symbiosis of oppressor and the oppressed, blacks took a hard realism. They acquired the language of the white man, though they inflected it with refusal. And because racism fell upon all blacks, regardless of class, a bond developed between the poor and the bourgeoisie, thence the possibility of a leadership class able to speak out for the entire group. Black political leaders, religious leaders, protest writers of national reputation—there are no truly comparable Mexican-American names. The Mexican American has trusted memory over public life.

With World War II came a big change. Hundreds of thousands of Mexican Americans were drafted to fight in Europe and Asia. And when the war was over, they returned home to a G.I. Bill and with the

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expectation of an improved future. By the 1950s, Mexican Americans throughout the Southwest were busy becoming middle class. I would see them around Sacramento: a Mexican-American dentist; a shoe salesman at Weinstock's; a radio announcer; the couple that ran the tiny Mexican food store that became, before I graduated from high school, a block-long electrified MEXICATESSAN. These were not "role models" exactly; they were people like my parents, at home in America.

Mexican Americans as a distinct, not to say an officially recognized, "minority group" did not exist on a national survey until the late 1960s, the years of affirmative action. By then it was determined statistically that Mexican Americans constituted a disadvantaged society, living in worse conditions than most other Americans, having less education, facing bleaker sidewalks or Safeways.

In the 1960s, the national habit of many Americans was to seek from the comparison with black Americans a kind of analogy. Mexican-American social activists, especially new student activists, insisted upon a rough similarity of the two societies, ignoring any complex factor of history that might disqualify the equation. The critique made by Mexican-American activists was against a "racist" America. From within the "Third World Student Movement" on campus, "*la raza*" emerged as a prominent float, the call to racial justice and singular pride.

In fact, there is no such thing as a Mexican race. In fact, most Mexicans are of mixed race, *mestizo*. The nation that was born of a rape became a marriage of old world and new. Miscegenation is the Giaconda secret of Mexico, her trump among nations. The great majority of Mexicans carry the blood of the Spaniard and Indian both.

The period we call "the Sixties" granted license in the 1970s to the casual romanticism of middle-class Americans competing with one another to play the role of society's primary victim. One heard Mexican Americans of the middle class publicly proclaiming their brotherhood with the lower class, even denying any distinction among classes where *la raza* was concerned. The undergraduate took to calling himself a "Chicano," using the slang term working-class Mexican Americans use to name themselves. To a movement so blissfully unconcerned about the importance of class came obvious ironies. Campus Chicanos became the primary beneficiaries of their own non-negotiable set of demands. In the name of racial integration, a handful of persons (never mind that they might be middle-class) were admitted and advanced to form an instant leadership class. Affirmative action on the campus thus led to a parody Marxism, the revolutionary creation of a bourgeoisie.

By the late 1970s, those of us in the first generation of affirmative action had turned thirty-five; microphones passed into eager hands. My

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mother noticed. And Mexico noticed. President Luis Echeverría invited groups of Chicano leaders to visit Mexico with the apparent goal of creating an American lobby for the interests of Mexico. President Jimmy Carter shrewdly discouraged the Mexican government from using Americans as Mexico's emissaries. It was, nonetheless, President Carter who appointed a Mexican American, Julian Nava, to serve as America's ambassador to Mexico City.

Nava's term was not a success. He went to Mexico City proclaiming himself a Chicano, but the term, of no currency in Mexico, palled there. When Nava played up his familiarity with Mexico, he offended; the Mexicans turned away; he presumed too much. (It was one thing for Mexico to regard the Mexican American as, after all, more Mexican than American, but here was a hybrid impertinence.) When Nava acted too much the American, the Mexicans dismissed him as a traitor to Mexico. (In his glass apartment overlooking Mexico City, a novelist says that he does not mind in the least that I call myself an American. "But when I hear Mexicans in the United States talk about George Washington as the father of their country," he exhales a florid ellipsis of cigarette smoke.)

Even as Mexico pauses in the uncertainty of her regard for the Mexican American, the old relationship between mother and child is reversing itself. What President Echeverría envisioned a decade ago has come to pass. Mexican Americans are becoming an important lobby for Mexico in America. On a range of issues, from Central American civil war to illegal immigration, the American press seeks the opinion of Hispanic leaders. Some journalists, it's true, have noticed that Hispanic leaders stand apart from the majority on key issues like illegal immigration. (Polls suggest that, as a group, Hispanics are at least ambivalent at the prospect of an uncontrolled southern border, though everyone, of course, is acquainted with the exceptional case of a worthy cousin who deserves a chance to make it in America.) The Hispanic leadership, nonetheless, continues to speak with the authority of an assured constituency.

My mother saw Henry Cisneros twice on "Sixty Minutes." Now she says she would vote for him for any office. Had it not been for CBS News, my mother would never have heard of Henry Cisneros. Cisneros's predicament is the predicament of others in the new Hispanic leadership. He did not work his way to power through ethnic ward politics. He was unveiled to his native city after having been groomed to power by the admissions committees of several colleges. Later, he was presented to a national television audience, commanding a most attractive bilingualism.

After his meeting at the last Democratic Convention with Walter

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Mondale, as an honorary vice-presidential running mate, Cisneros greeted reporters in Ivy League Spanish. He smiled. They smiled back. The interesting question is whether politicians like Henry Cisneros—middle-class Mexican Americans—will be able to find and to win the lower-class population they have been appointed to represent and are assumed already to represent.

III

Los Pobres

In Mexican-American kitchens I have visited, if there is a patriotic icon to America, it is most likely to be the picture of "John-John" Kennedy saluting his father's casket with the portrait of John F. Kennedy superimposed above. Traditionally, Mexican Americans have voted in very small numbers, and the majority have voted Democratic. But now there is speculation among prospecting Republican party officials that the Mexican-American nougat is conservative. The Mexican American has become the quantum Candide in a modern political allegory. At the Republican National Convention in Dallas, Katherine Davalos Ortega, Treasurer of the United States, was appointed keynote speaker. She served to sound one note from the podium—welcome—and her invitation was amplified in Spanish: "*Nuestra casa es su casa.*"

Almost a century earlier, Mary Austin wrote of the abiding sympathy Mexicans feel with the landscape of the Southwest, that land which is continuous with the fulcrum of Mexico. Spanish exploration and Mexican settlement corresponded to "cactus country." There are today large Mexican-American communities in cities like Seattle and Chicago and Kansas City, but the majority of Mexican Americans (80 percent) live, where most always have settled, in the Southwest. In California, one in five persons is Mexican American; in New Mexico it is one in three; in Texas the majority of Mexican Americans live in the southern part of the state, one or two hours from the Mexican border. The emerging political influence of Mexican Americans is certain to be enhanced by such geographic concentration. In the past, however, this concentration worked to the Mexican American's disadvantage.

Carey McWilliams, the man who has written best about Mexican Americans, observed that, when they moved away from the Southwest, Mexican Americans have tended to follow a conventional path of assimilation. There were unions in the factories of the Midwest and there was something like steady work on the assembly line. By contrast,

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in the Southwest, work has tended to be seasonal. Convoys of Mexican families were obliged to submit themselves to the vegetable cycle of the region. A post-office box was the only permanence; home was a trailer or a Quonset hut city. Or home was a crowded barrio where new immigrants kept wages low. One pair of hands was always raised to replace another. And the going rate of labor negotiation was Take It Or Leave It.

There was also a more subtle problem of proportion. The Southwest was home or something very much like home. Cities, rivers, and mountains had Spanish names. The cut of the land or its fold, the bleaching sky, the swath of the wind, the length of shadows—all these suggested Mexico. Mitigated was the sense of dislocation otherwise common to immigrant experience. Unlike other Americans, Mexicans did not leave the past behind in another time zone. The Southwest thus permitted the Mexican to evade finality, the knowledge that the past is indeed past; that it is necessary to assume a new identity in the United States.

One hears so often today of the great migration of Mexicans, south to north, that one may forget to notice the other great travel involving Mexicans: from country to city. Mexicans coming to America traverse not only an international border, but the more fundamental border dividing rural from urban life. Mexican Americans are today more urbanized than the national average. Nearly 90 percent live in the city. But we are more recently urbanized than the national average. Mexico, which is the past, is recollected as a village.

Mexicans are not the first immigrants to come to America from a medieval village. But the Mexican who lands in America today discerns only an abstract pattern of secular modernity: suburbs, freeways, smoked-glass towers, frightened faces. Imagine it: After generations of ancestors asleep beneath the earth and awake above the sky, after generations of roosters and priests and sleeping dogs, there is the city. Great political power awaits the person or the political party able to touch the pastoral longing (the urban frustration) in the Mexican soul.

One man who has touched the rural conservatism of Mexican Americans is Cesar Chavez, who organized farmworkers in the 1960s. Among Mexican Americans, though the majority lived in the city, Chavez exerted and continues to exert a compelling authority. He invoked some pastoral memory in the Mexican American, and for that he will be long remembered as a hero—though as a folk hero, I think, and not as a politician.

I remember his march through California's Central Valley in 1966, the "Lenten pilgrimage." Lines of men, women, and children passed beneath rolling clouds, beneath the red and black union flags and the

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painted silk banners of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Their destination was the state capital, Sacramento, the city, Easter. They were private people praying in a public voice, chanting their objectified themes of "penitence, pilgrimage and revolution." Here were the most compelling symbols of the pastoral past—life on the land (the farmworker); the flag, the procession in song (a people united, the village); the Virgin Mary (her ancient consolation in sorrow).

Support for the Farm Worker's Union came from the Kennedy brothers and from other Democratic politicians, but Chavez wielded a spiritual authority that, if it was political at all, wasn't mundane and had to be exerted in large priestly ways or it was squandered. By the late 1970s, Chavez spent his energies in legislative maneuvers as his union got mixed up in a power struggle with the Teamsters. Criticized in the liberal press for thus allowing his union to unravel, Chavez became a quixotic figure, a Gandhi without an India. But to Mexican Americans, Chavez would remain a genuine hero, of miraculous potential rather than of political effectiveness, a hero of the land.

Pitiless land. Mexico has not slaked the sadness of generations. For generations, from Mexico City would come promises of land reform, the encroaching mirage of future wealth. The city broke most of its promises. From the city would come rumors of a corrupt, comic officialdom, as son succeeded father. The Mexican long ago learned the wisdom of slight expectations, a resignation that must seem near despair when it lands in America.

Mexicans learned to look to the sky. One among the four chambers of the beating hearts of Mexicans is a cave of Mary. Mexicans believe that in the sixteenth century the Christian Mary, in the spangled raiment of an Aztec princess, appeared to an Indian. Befitting Mexico's *mestizo* culture, the Virgin of Guadalupe is an extraordinary example of Catholic syncretism. To this Virgin Mary the Mexican turns today, not so much in the hope of miraculous change, as for consolation in sorrow (all that she promised was to share human suffering). You will see her image everywhere in Mexico as you will see it in the Southwest—in bubblegum colors or in lovely shades of melon—a decal on the car window; the blue tattoo on an arm; a street mural in Los Angeles.

Can you understand? U.S. citizens on fiesta tours register disbelief at the spectacle of suppliant peasants applying meager coins to the mass of gold in Mexican churches. ("All this poverty, and look at these churches!") Seek the conservative Mexican there on his knees before the Virgin, where he is being fed, his devotion returned. Priests and nuns arrive in Mexico from Western Europe and America to counter pessimism with holy progressivism, with activism, and expect the Mexican in

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turn to betray his tragic knowledge. They ask him to abandon the wisdom of resignation because they no longer believe. But when the Mexican descends to the neon city, he does not mistake it for some city of God. He has erected golden churches in imitation of a world that keeps hidden, always beyond the given.

Look for the conservative Mexican within his gravity. For Mexican Americans, the purchase of a house comes before a car. In the cluster of family snapshots around the fireplace mirror, the past is held firmly from the center, while outside, a few miles away in the American city, there is only loosening, unraveling, generations living apart—old ladies living out their loneliness in fiercely flowered housedresses.

Seek the conservative Mexican now in the embrace of the family, where there is much noise. The family stands as consolation because, in the certainty of generation, there is protection against an uncertain future. At the center of gravity the child is enshrined. He is not at the very top of the family tree, as it is with American families. He is not expected to fly away, to advance the family's fortunes. He is not expected to live his own life.

Femininity gets defined for the Mexican woman as motherhood. She is the source of the family's stability. In the role of mother she governs; as wife she stands back. "Mexican women have to ask permission," a nun who assists battered wives in Los Angeles tells me. Only a culture so cruel to the wife could sustain such a sentimental regard for *mamasita*. By contrast, much license is granted the Mexican male. If the brother is taught to hover about his young sister (he is guarding her virginity), the adolescent is otherwise, elsewhere, schooled in seduction. But for the man as for the woman, sexuality is expressed as parenthood. The male, by definition, is father.

In a feminist age, Americans have borrowed the Spanish word *macho*. In English, the macho is outwardly playful, sexy, counter-domestic. American macho is drag, the false type for the male, as Mae West is the false type for the female. *Machismo* in Mexican Spanish is more akin to the Latin *gravitas*. The *macho* is someone to count on. The *macho* has responsibilities; he is expected to stick around, to provide. (In hundreds of towns in the Southwest, for generations, on Saturday afternoons you could see them: Mexican men, wearing the clean white shirts they had laundered themselves, crowding Western Union offices to send money home to their families.) The *macho* is not so much romantic Gilbert Roland or the good guy Lee Trevino; he is more like Bobby Chacon, the slight, leathery, middle-aged boxer, going twelve rounds the night after his wife commits suicide. Something in this the culture terms *macho*. The Mexican holds his own ground. There is

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sobriety in the male, and silence too, a severe limit on emotional range that marks a Mexican brand of insecurity. The male doesn't cry. The male isn't weak. The male is silent or he explodes. The male turns wife beater.

It may embarrass the social activist to speak of a Mexican obstinacy; he will more quickly point at discriminations, at the *gringo*'s faults. The American educational system, for instance: Generations of Mexican Americans have been poorly taught, passed on, graduated from high schools or set loose before graduation, barely able to speak or to write English. But what the social activist probably won't add is that Mexican culture has been part of the problem. Mexican Americans have tightened their hold on a peasant culture because they live in superstitious fear of the American diaspora. Mexican Americans are often in awe of education, of getting "too much" schooling, of changing too much, moving too far from home.

It has been the Democratic party, in its most liberal aspect, that has successfully dealt with this conservative fear of change. For example, support for bilingual programs—the proposition that one should be allowed to use one's "family language" in public—has come most fulsomely from Democratic rather than Republican leaders, and for good reason. There is a romantic strain in liberal, reformist politics that offers great comfort to the poor. It is the romanticism of the nineteenth-century social reformer who attempted to unionize workers by promising that old intimate ties would survive in public. It became the great modern myth of the Left: What you are with one another in private—a brother!—you can also be in public, part of a universal brotherhood.

If Mexican Americans turn to the Republican party today, it may be because romanticism thins in the city. There is, after all, a difference between public and private, a border separating the village of *tu* from the city of *usted*.

Since the 1960s, the Roman Catholic church in Latin America has lost an estimated 15 percent of its members to fundamentalist Protestantism. The post-Vatican Council Church has become ecumenical, a religion of the pluralistic city, no longer the medieval fortress guarding the village. It is rather a deep-dish Protestantism, beamed in a straight line from North Carolina or Georgia, that offers a tidy faith, the old way, rural and close, albeit without the sentient authority of velvet and roses. As in Latin America, so in the new cities of the American Southwest, the small Protestant church revives the Catholic memory of the countryside. In the small evangelical church, people who are demoralized by the city turn to the assurance of cleansing and community. In the small church, the Mexican American has a first name again. He grips another's hand

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against anonymity. The hymns resound over the city, wild with grace, and the world becomes certain and small, even as the memory of the village recedes.

IV

Mañana

The sea is blue. A dusty road leads through eucalyptus, past the cemetery, to the village. The house is empty, shuttered, locked. The clay stove is cold enough for spiders, which spin and twirl like uninterrupted angels. The echo answers all questions.

The future? What will happen if Latin American civil war spreads? What will happen if the Mexican government explodes from bloated corruption? Where is the end to the line of illegal immigrants?

It is 1986 and the border does not hold. Entire families are coming, grandmothers, uncles, cousins. America is no longer the male's solitary journey as it was in the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s. More of the family is now here than there. But the decision to leave for the American city was not virtuous; it was governed by pragmatism. In their warm American kitchen, Mexicans talk among beer bottles of an eventual return to the empyrean.

America wants to tell the new immigrants that she is sorry—and she is sorry—but there is not enough space, air, welfare—not enough America for all who would come. But then Americans take the Mexicans up on their offer of cheap labor. Mexicans are all around the neighborhood on Saturdays, making those pleasant faraway sounds, buzzing, chopping, mowing. They have become the new Americans, busy at a time when we grow more leisured, more Latin.

For the time being, Mexicans continue to arrive with punctual innocence. No intention to be disrespectful of American laws, *señor*, but necessity is necessity. The past meets the future in an opposing glance. The American wonders about the future; the Mexican immigrant broods over the past.

I can imagine a drama, perhaps a tragedy, an outburst of xenophobia played out in the American Southwest. And because the poor have the most to lose from uncontrolled immigration, I imagine Mexican Americans joining the resistance to more immigrants, just as I imagine black Americans resisting illegal immigration.

Mexican Americans become a people whose future gets told in numbers. In the 1970s our population nearly doubled. We are now eight

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million officially; unofficially (guessing at those illegally here) we are eleven million, maybe more. On a statistical plane, we are twenty-two years old. We are married. We have babies. Mexican-American women show the highest fertility rate of any ethnic group in America. We are 60 percent of the nation's entire Hispanic population.

A commonplace of recent articles about us is that, along with other Hispanics, Mexican Americans are destined to "displace" blacks as America's largest minority group by the year 2020 or sooner. This prediction is nonsensical in that Hispanics are an ethnic group not a racial group—many Hispanics are black. The dangerous future I envision is one in which Hispanic numbers will be used as a way of evading the black in America. The danger commonly conjured is that the numbers portend an American Quebec. And while we talk, the numbers race, the odds change like digits on a bookie's marquee. America is the fifth-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world (behind Mexico, Spain, Argentina, and Columbia).

Most articles on Mexico end up in a jumble of numbers, unreadable, usually accompanied by photographs that will casually break your heart. In one such photograph, I see the teenaged father walking down the street with three children, and only here can I read the writing on the wall. The Shavian life force belongs to them. I am unmarried, barren, witty. My day is spent with you; we are neighbors. As much as you could be, I am awed by the generosity of the Mexican immigrant's embrace of his child. I have heard these new immigrants sing hymns on Sundays, heard hymns in Catholic churches sung with stunning faith. The future is theirs. Their ascendancy has nothing to do with borders. It is simply a matter of time. I, meanwhile, have cast my lot with you in the America of *Time* magazine, the *Time* that had a cover story on Mexico titled "The Population Curse"—as though life, and not illness and poverty and death, was the true enemy.

In his office, the Catholic bishop, a Mexican American, points over my shoulder to a mosaic image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the wall. "That is the way I think of American society," the bishop says. "America is not a melting pot. America is more like that—a mosaic made up of different colors, each beautiful, but united to produce a work of art."

America's bishops have made headlines with their opinions about the MX missile and the morality of capitalism. Less publicized has been their "Pastoral Letter on Hispanic Ministry" issued in 1984, wherein the bishops announced themselves to be against assimilation as a social goal for Hispanics. They wrote: "The Church shows its esteem for the dignity of Hispanic culture by working to ensure pluralism, not assimilation and uniformity." But while the bishops piously fret themselves with the

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thought that Hispanics may be changed too much by America, Hispanics are destined to change America, change the very tenor of institutions like the Roman Catholic church. By the end of the century, half of the world's Catholics will be Spanish-speaking. Already in the United States, one Catholic in four is Hispanic. Numbers make it inevitable that Hispanics will reshape the character of an American church that has been, for over a century, largely Irish in cast.

I am speaking of assimilation. I am not speaking of tacos or bilingual voting ballots. I am speaking of the soul, the real soul, which passes matter and surpasses matter. The residue of the past is told in a mood, a gesture of hands, a tone of voice. A man who knows my family well tells me today that when I write in English he can recognize the sound of my father speaking in Spanish. This is the way Mexico will influence America in the future: American English will be changed by the Mexican immigrant children who put it in their mouths. Optimism will be weighted, in time, by some thicker mood.

Meanwhile, I am about as much of Mexico as you are going to get on paper. Diluted: a second-generation American, a middle-class man, a man born to the city, someone who is interested in Mexico. The obvious truth about assimilation is that it is never even. The advantage goes to the more numerous, the longer settled, the wealthy. The child of immigrant parents goes off to school and comes home knowing more about British kings than about his grandfather's travail. (So it was that America happened to me. I turned into you.) But if assimilation is never equal, assimilation is always reciprocal.

Mexican Americans are destined to become your neighbors, your boyfriends, your wives, your uncles. We will change you. Mexico will change you. But Mexico's greatest influence will be carried by an Americanized middle class and not by the less assimilated working class. The paradox of assimilation is that ethnic influence occurs not when people live apart, in distinct and separate neighborhoods, but—where it seems least likely to happen—in the arena of the middle class, the great American mall.

My nephews and nieces today. They will grow up and we will call them Hispanic. Hispanic is the word for their future. Already "Mexican American" as a political category, an idea, is being transposed to "Hispanic." The same has happened to other immigrant groups in this country. Think of the Jewish immigrants or the Italians. Many came, carefully observing Old World distinctions and rivalries. German Jews distinguished themselves from Russian Jews. The Venetian was adamant about not being taken for a Neapolitan. But to America, what did such claims matter? All Italians looked and sounded the same. A Jew

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was a Jew. And now America shrugs again. Palm trees or cactus, it's all the same; Hispanics are all the same.

Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, Cuban Americans—all are becoming Hispanic. A new group consciousness is being forged on this side of the border. A new accent is being heard, a uniform American Spanish. Politicians already have gotten the point. There is strength in Hispanic numbers and there is bound to be influence. The Mexican-American activist (né the Chicano) is now a Hispanic politician.

A century ago, *Spanish* was the acceptable term. To those Mexican Americans who claimed to be Spanish came admission to circles of civility. Spanish meant light skin, of course, though it was not always an exact racial designation. To be Spanish meant that one had money or the memory of money or pretense to money. Spanish meant land. Today's term is *Hispanic*. It signals a movement out of the barrio, the wider view taken. The smart coinage. The adjective that fits an emerging middle class of business executives and lawyers and doctors and writers like me.

But you have to wonder how far the term will take us. For the middle-class Mexican American, intermarriage outside the group has long been possible; it is common today. At the very moment of our numerical celebrity, we may be about to disappear into the melting pot. *Hispanic*, as our middle-class label, may turn out to be an ironic badge of influence that signals, in but another generation, our political decline.

My youngest nephew stares at me with dark eyes. He has blond hair. I think it is Mexico I see in his eyes, the unfathomable regard of the past, while ahead of him stretches Sesame Street. What will he think of his past, except to know that he has several? What will he know of Mexico except to know that his ancestors lived on land he will never inherit? What Mexico bequeaths to him passes silently through his heart, something to take with him as he disappears, like my father, into America.

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The Music Box

THOMAS SWISS

In the next room,
  Because the music box
    Plays this single tune,
My wife is singing
  "Happy Birthday." She sings
    To our son, but

Of course it's not his birthday.
  Nor anyone else's we know.
    It's just a gloomy Saturday
In the middle of March,
  A light snow falling
    And the cold slowly killing

The tulips which started
  Too early this year.
    My wife's high voice
Fills the sleepy air,
  As she changes
    The second couplet:

Happy Birthday to you,
  She sings again,
    You look like a monkey
And you smell like one, too.
  It's a kid's silly version,
    Picked up twenty years ago,

Recited, then as now, to tease.
  It has no effect at all on Jacob.
    He's ten months old,

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And only this odd box
  Holds his attention,
    Chiming and spinning

Three tiny figures around.
  There's a boy
    Holding a blue balloon
And a girl holding
  A green one. Their companion,
    A dog of indeterminate breed,

Winds clockwise between them.
  How could they not be happy?
    This handsomely crafted
Circle of friends . . .
  Frozen there, they have
    Only one task:

Respond to the key's release.
  Now, as they track
    Their given course—
Their painted faces,
  The size of thumbnails,
    Fixed permanently in grins—

Jacob is speechless,
  But my wife continues to sing.
    Monkeys and zoos,

Candles, balloons,
  We can name these emblems
    Of childhood, but not

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What they called up in us:
  The complex sensations
    That often left us stunned.
Singing to others,
  We sing for ourselves.
    My wife's voice, the absurd lyric,

Carry her back—and me with her—
  To the wooden past, those
    Mornings I heard
Someone singing my own name:
  My young mother calling,
    Calling me back

From that childhood sleep
  Which is itself
    A kind of perfect music.

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How Roman Emperors Became Gods

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO

GERTRUD BING, THE DIRECTOR OF THE WARBURG INSTITUTE, used to tell with great gusto a story that apparently has not found its way into the biography of Aby Warburg by Ernst Gombrich. Bing happened to be in Rome with Warburg, the founder and patron saint of the Warburg Institute, on that day, February 11, 1929, on which Mussolini and the Pope proclaimed the reconciliation between Italy and the Catholic Church and signed a concordat, the first bilateral agreement to be reached between post-Risorgimento Italy and the Church of Rome. There were in Rome tremendous popular demonstrations, whether orchestrated from above or from below. Mussolini became overnight the "man of providence," and in such an inconvenient position he remained for many years. Circulation in the streets of Rome was not very easy on that day, and it so happened that Warburg disappeared from the sight of his companions. They anxiously waited for him back in the Hotel Eden, but there was no sign of him for dinner. Bing and the others even telephoned the police. But Warburg reappeared in the hotel before midnight, and when he was reproached he soberly replied something like this in his picturesque German: "You know that throughout my life I have been interested in the revival of paganism and pagan festivals. Today I had the chance of my life to be present at the re-paganization of Rome, and you complain that I remained to watch it."

Warburg's remarks may help to explain to people younger than myself why some of the most original work on the Roman imperial cult should have been done around the years 1929–34 in that ambiguous atmosphere of the revival of emperor-worship in which it was difficult to separate adulation from political emotion, and political emotion from religious or superstitious excitement. E. J. Bickerman's seminal essay on apotheosis appeared in 1929; L. R. Taylor's great book *Divinity of the Roman Emperor* in 1931; A. Alföldi's on the monarchic ceremonial in 1934; several of A. D. Nock's capital studies on the imperial cult and

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related notions between 1930 and 1934, including his chapter in *Cambridge Ancient History* X of 1934.

If one looks at these studies now, it is easy to notice two not necessarily contradictory features. On the one hand, the authors are keen to show how the imperial cult was grafted into the traditional patterns of Greco-Roman religion. On the other hand, they are trying to keep the imperial cult below and perhaps outside the zone of true religion. We owe to A. D. Nock the much-repeated formulation that the emperor's cult was homage, not worship. As James Frazer's *Golden Bough* had made everyone familiar with primitive divine kings, the distinction between homage and worship was therefore meant to define the difference between the alleged primitive confusion of god with king and this later more sophisticated Greco-Roman phenomenon of ruler-cult. For good or ill the imperial cult was seen as a symptom of absolutism and treated more as an expression of political allegiance than of religious emotion. This, incidentally, allowed scholars divided between their Fascist sympathies and their religious convictions, such as A. Alföldi and J. Carcopino, to avoid religious problems.

A marked reaction against the political interpretation of the imperial cult was to be expected in the post-Fascist era, and at last we have it. If anything is surprising, it is that it has taken so long to come, but we classical scholars are notoriously slow-witted. A number of anthropologically minded scholars, taking their cue from the anthropological work of Clifford Geertz—for instance in his essay "Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbols of Power"—have been arguing that to deny the religious value of the imperial cult is equivalent to taking a Christianizing view of religion.

I find the first clear expression of this view in the well-argued chapter on the divine emperors in the 1978 volume *Conquerors and Slaves* by Keith Hopkins. The most recent and complete expression is the book by Simon Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (1984), which has deservedly received much favorable attention. But beyond this theoretical display, which has become characteristic of classical scholars in fear of not being sufficiently up-to-date, there is the serious purpose of discovering the meaning of the imperial cult by analyzing the acts and the words that were the substance of the cult.

Much of Price's work is concerned with making sense of the combination of public space and private time that characterizes the performance of the imperial cult. While the various monuments in honor of the emperor placed him "within the physical framework of the city," according to Price, individual or group initiative conditioned the forms, frequency, and emotional intensity of the cult in each place. This is particularly evident in small communities, even villages, where the

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imperial cult is often found associated with ancestral gods. But perhaps the need for personal initiative is most clearly demonstrated by those places in which the imperial cult is absent, simply because the local people were not Hellenized enough to want it. The concluding chapter of Price's book is a very valuable attempt to explain the imperial cult as an effort by the Greeks to make sense of "an otherwise incomprehensible intrusion of authority into their world."

The imperial cult, in Price's terms, stabilized the religious order of the Greek world. As the imperial cult enhanced the dominance of local elites over the lower classes, it was also a reaffirmation of the structure of local power that was then coordinated at city level with the symbolism of the imperial cult. This is what Clifford Geertz would call the inherent sacredness of sovereign power. In Geertz's words: "The gravity of high politics and the solemnity of high worship spring from liker impulses than might first appear." Clifford Geertz himself had an easy time finding confirmation not only in Java, which he likes and knows so well, but in Elizabethan England, in nineteenth-century Morocco, and in American presidential elections.

In fact, however, the real difficulty we feel in interpreting the Greco-Roman monarchic or ruler-cult is not now about questions of relations between religion and politics. I think we can cope with these without much trouble. In our contemporary world there is no lack of politically religious emotions or of religiously political emotions; and it is our personal responsibility as rational beings to decide whether we want these emotions to prevail. What the Greco-Roman world contributes to our education, or at least to our experience, is that such tangled emotions had been kept remarkably under control for some centuries by both Greeks and Romans. For a long time the Greeks and Romans did without monarchy or at least divine monarchy. Even in Sparta the kings were not gods. In the Greece we know from the seventh to the fourth century B.C., political power was in the hands of magistrates who were elected in assemblies by their peers. Even tyrants had to receive legitimization from assemblies. In Rome, monarchy disappeared toward the end of the sixth century. Whatever this monarchy might have been, it was not remembered as a monarchy by divine right. Why, then, was divine monarchy resurrected in Greece and Rome in an age of philosophic discussion about the nature of the gods and about the place of men in the world? The imperial cult prospered at a time in which a philosophically minded doctor like Galen argued that true piety is not to be found in bloody sacrifices to gods but in the study of nature. And how could a monarch be at the same time a man and a god, and more precisely, in Rome, a magistrate and a god?

I am not sure that I know the answer to these questions. But in the

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following pages I shall try to argue a partial answer on the presupposition that people were finding it easy to call exceptionally powerful men gods because they were losing faith in the existence, or at least in the effectiveness, of their traditional gods. One has to add, about the Roman Empire, that these powerful men were aliens importing powerful alien ideas and institutions, such as Roman citizenship and Roman peace. Not by chance was the worship of Roman emperors associated with that of Roman abstract ideas like Fides or Pax or Roma herself turned into a goddess. In the provinces, the Roman rulers were the importers of an alien system of values and habits that did not contradict, and might even support, the extant polytheistic establishment. The association of an obviously powerful emperor with gods whose power was not so obvious might well reassure the believers in those gods.

II

There was a notion of the hero among the Greeks that connected (in an obscure way for us but, no doubt, more clearly for the Greeks) the zone of the gods with the zone of men. The heroes were dead men of special value whose tombs received the tribute of some sort of cult. The Spartans chose Orestes as a hero, and the Thebans imported the bones of Hector for that purpose—and of course the Athenians had Theseus and Oedipus. The presence of the bodies of such men was considered a blessing for the place. Real or imaginary founders of a city were naturally entitled to such tomb-worship by the city concerned. That the range was vast is indicated by the example of the Spartan Brasidas who, in 422 B.C., was rewarded with a cult of this kind at Amphipolis, where he had died defending the interests of Sparta. We may also remind ourselves that at the beginning of the fifth century the mad boxer Cleomedes, according to Pausanias, received such a cult at Astypalaia after having mysteriously disappeared in a homicidal bout. The Delphic priestess proclaimed him "the last of the heroes. . . . Honour him with sacrifices as being no longer a mortal." As Thucydides confirms, games and yearly sacrifices were the most obvious forms of cult for heroes.

But though Cleomedes was by no means to remain the last of the heroes, the Delphic priestess intimated more than she could know with that adjective *last*. In the fourth century the notion of hero lost in importance compared with that of divine man or indeed of man recognized to be god. It is an essential aspect of the ruler-cult in Hellenistic and Roman times that it develops this notion of divine man and is not founded upon the notion of hero. One excellent reason, among others, is that the ruler-cult, though interested in past rulers, was basically oriented toward living sovereigns: it was meant to explain, justify, and

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recognize present, not past, power. If the oracle of Delphi, according to Herodotus, had difficulty in deciding whether Lycurgus, a legislator in Sparta, was a man or a god, fourth-century people seem to have had less difficulty in deciding that the Spartan Lysander, having destroyed the Athenian empire, deserved in his lifetime altars like a god, a hymn (paean) sung to him, and the transformation of a festival for the goddess Hera into a festival for Lysander (the Lysandreia). Attempts were made to adapt the notion of a dead hero to a living man; for instance, Dio of Syracuse was considered to be a hero while alive.

But the trend was toward blurring the distinction between man and god. Thus King Philip, the father of Alexander, got a sanctuary at Olympia while alive and a statue to keep company with the statues of the Twelve Olympian Gods. We have here the transition to the frank demand in 324 by Alexander the Great that the Greek cities should recognize him as a god. We do not know exactly what his envoys said, and even less what the poor Greek cities actually answered. We do not even know whether Demosthenes was talking tongue in cheek when he suggested leaving to Alexander the choice between being the son of Zeus or the son of Poseidon. We happen to know that the sons of Poseidon did not enjoy a very good reputation, but the text that reports Demosthenes' words—Hyperides' speech against Demosthenes—is badly fragmented at this point. Perhaps what matters most for our purpose is that in ordinary parlance, both in Greece and in Rome, the word *god* or *godlike* could be attached to a "man" without thinking twice—in affection, in admiration, or in adulation. If Speusippus and Cicero called Plato a god, Cicero could also call the father of P. Lentulus "deum ac parentem fortunae et nominis mei," and of course Virgil says in a private context "namque erit ille mihi semper deus." After all, even Epicurus could be a god to Lucretius.

Hellenistic kings had their dynastic cults in various forms, while individual cities were able to introduce the cult of individual kings, not necessarily their own rulers. Individuals were free to display loyalty or gratitude by acts of cults to sovereigns. Acts of cult varied from building temples and setting up statues to performing sacrifices and organizing festivals; but perhaps sacrifices were the most obvious sign of cult. There were territorial and local differences. In Pergamum they seem to have built temples only to dead kings and to have treated living kings as *Synnaoi*, as associates in a temple, of traditional gods. *Synnaoi* to gods have been made famous by a classic piece of research by A. D. Nock in *Harvard Studies* of 1930. Roman magistrates and governors soon joined or replaced Hellenistic kings in the divine honors among Greek and Hellenized people. A list of cults of Roman magistrates in Greek cities is given by G. W. Bowersock in *Augustus and the Greek World*. It

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begins with M. Claudius Marcellus in Syracuse at the end of the third century B.C. and ends in the early first century A.D., oddly enough at Miletus, in a cult for the governor of Egypt, Cn. Vergilius Capito. A cult of a Roman magistrate could last three centuries, like that of Titus Flamininus, who had the reputation of having proclaimed the freedom of the Greeks, or could last only a few years, such as that of Sulla in Athens. It is worth remembering that Cicero, though vain, firmly declined worship when he was a provincial governor. During the time of Augustus, the cult of Roman provincial governors disappeared to the exclusive benefit of the cult of the emperor.

But the cult bestowed on the Roman governors in the Greek provinces that they ruled or visited was not always a simple application of Hellenistic ruler-cult. The Greeks, or rather some Greek city, put Dea Roma among their gods; so did Smyrna, according to Tacitus, as early as 195 B.C. Fides was also acceptable to Greeks as a goddess personifying Roman rule. Plutarch tells us in his account of Titus Flamininus that he was invoked in a hymn at Chalkis together with Zeus or Jupiter, Roma and Fides, and that, though he had his own priest, he shared a temple with Herakles and Apollo. About the end of the second century B.C. three cities of Asia Minor agreed not to harm the Romans and put this agreement under the protection of Zeus, Concord, and Dea Roma.

III

If the intervention of Dea Roma and Fides shows that it was not simply a question of Hellenistic ruler-cult transferred to Roman rulers, we have also to take into account the existence in Rome itself in the last centuries of the Republic of a need for legitimization of exceptional power. The problem was bound to present itself as soon as the military leaders and conquerors began to claim privileges that were incompatible with the traditional aristocratic structure of the Roman Republic. Scipio Africanus, like Alexander, was supposed to have been born from the intercourse of his mother with a non-human being, a divine snake.

Another member of the gens Cornelia, Sulla, was Felix and a protégé of Venus, while his rival Marius received homage of food and drink in Rome like a god. Caesar went beyond all of them, first because the Julii claimed descent from Venus, and second because he received religious honors before his death, the limits of which are in dispute, and full deification after his death. In 45 B.C., while he was alive, his cult-statue was placed in the temple of Quirinus with the inscription "To the Invincible God." His *clementia* had a cult. That he was alive when he was given a priest, a "*flamen*," in the person of Antony seems to be put beyond doubt by Cicero in *Philippics*. Octavian, being Caesar's adopted

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son, became *divi filius* in 42 B.C. For a while he had to compete with Antony, who paraded as a new Dionysus in Athens and elsewhere. In the East he was soon associated with the cult of Rome.

But Octavian was presenting himself as a restorer of the Roman republican traditions. There was a limit to the divinity of an alleged republican leader. In Rome itself, therefore, he was satisfied with being the son of a god and being called Augustus, which was a borderline qualification between heaven and earth. Besides, he was a protégé of Apollo. Yet forms of his cult crept in even in Rome through individuals and groups: they were even more obvious in the rest of Italy and in the Western provinces, not to speak of the East. On the Western side the cult of the ruler's *genius* became especially acceptable. I wish we really knew what a *genius* was, a sort of guardian angel, perhaps even mortal like his possessor, if we have to follow Horace (*Epist.* 2,2,188).

Generally speaking, the emperor had to approve, to limit, and occasionally to refuse ruler-cult. He had to be worshipped, and yet he had to remain a man in order to live on social terms with the Roman aristocracy of which he was supposed to be the "Princeps." It suffices to remember that, on the formal side, the emperor was also the "Pontifex Maximus" of the Roman state: being both the first of the priests and a god was not so obvious. Emperors who acquired a bad reputation, such as Caligula, Nero, Domitian, and Commodus, are also those who, in our tradition, appeared to have requested or received more than their decent share of worship. Emperors had to decide at every step how far they could go. They knew instinctively that what suited Egypt would not suit Rome, but the intermediate stages were not self-evident. Cult after death was perhaps easier: it had a recognized model in the apotheosis of Romulus; it had something to do with ancestor cult; it had a Roman ritual; it was easily acceptable everywhere as a sign of the stability and continuity of the Empire. Yet even apotheosis, harmless as it was, could provoke irony and criticism, as Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* against the divinization of Claudius shows.

It is probably fair to say that the emperor during his lifetime was more of a god in his absence than in his presence, and that the success (for success it was) of the imperial cult in the provinces was owing to the presence with which it invested an absentee sovereign. His statues, his temples, his priests, the games, sacrifices, and other ceremonial acts that were performed in his honor helped to make him present: they also helped people to express their own interest in the preservation of the world in which they lived. We have an obvious difficulty in assessing how distant the power of Rome appeared to the provincials. After all, Rome was not a police state: internal security of towns was only moderately ensured by the central government. The army was of course

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very strong, but it was usually stationed at the boundaries of the Empire and interfered little with city life. Solidarity was hardly created by war efforts, except in emergencies. Tax collecting was a tangible, and inevitably unpopular, reality: few can have been aware of what they got in return for taxation. If the tribute was supposed to be for the emperor, it would not improve the image of the emperor. Again, the emperor was known to make laws and regulations and to answer petitions of various kinds. The great amount of paperwork passing from center to periphery and vice versa (about which we have now the learned work by Fergus Millar) was not the kind that would strike the imagination and create widespread loyalty. It was not in the language of the Roman administrative machine that people could express ambitions, pray for peace and prosperity, or dream of victory and greatness, even if vicariously.

Occasionally no doubt, though very seldom, the emperor appeared. His *adventus*, his arrival, would give scope for emotional outbursts and even for miracles, as the case of Vespasian in Egypt shows. But the *adventus* itself, to which I shall return, was already conditioned by the recognized method of facing the Roman emperor while not seeing him, which was the imperial cult. The *adventus* presupposed the imperial cult, not vice versa. I leave out here certain technical difficulties that one has to deal with in grasping the imperial cult—for instance, the types of sacrifice that were available to the worshipper—though not indiscriminately. The imperial cult is fraught with terminological little traps. For instance, though Greek makes a distinction between a real cult-statue, an *agalma*, and an image with only complimentary implications, an *eikon*, it is by no means evident that the distinction is invariably observed and that, consequently, we know that a text alludes to a cult-statue. But there is one aspect of the imperial cult that must be stressed because it is essential. An element of its strength was paradoxically the fact that it was *not* universally accepted. Indeed it was often imposed on indifferent or reluctant subjects by zealous governors. The Acts of the Christian Martyrs will soon remind us that there was an element of brutal imposition in the imperial cult. Not everybody liked it. After all, even Vespasian joked about becoming a god after death, and it was not a cheerful joke.

Other intellectuals, among them Tacitus, spoke of the ruler-cult as *Graeca adulatio*, and we may assume that the idea was shared by many cultivated Greeks. In the third century a Greek historian such as Dio Cassius could attribute to Maecenas a total condemnation of the imperial cult. Apart from these intellectuals who were annoyed or who smiled at the notion that a mortal became a god because of his office, there were of course those who hated the Roman Empire or an individual emperor. Most naturally, if something went wrong, portraits of the emperor,

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whether *agalmata* or *eikones*, would be the first target, as the story of the Four Emperors in A.D. 69 shows and the famous Antiochian riots of the fourth century confirm. Second, there was an increasing number of subjects of the Empire who had religious objections to the imperial cult. They were the Jews and, soon, the growing number of Christians. The Jews, especially after the attempt of Gaius to place his own statue in the Temple of Jerusalem, were more or less exempt from direct cult: they only prayed for the emperor. But, as the complicated story of the great Jewish rebellions shows, this was not enough to keep the Roman government pleased or the Jewish subjects quiet. The feeling that the Jews did not deserve their privileges must have been widespread. As a well-known passage in *Mishnah, Abodah Zarah,* 3, shows, statues were felt by the Jews to be potential troubles. The problem was basically the one we have mentioned: how would you recognize a cult-image if you saw one? As for the Christians, there was no privilege for them. The accusation that they did not worship the emperors—"deos non colitis et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis"—is for Tertullian (*Apologeticum* 10) the standard accusation. The rest of the tradition largely confirms his contention. It is unnecessary here to quote the well-known texts, such as the letter of Pliny the Younger to Trajan (10,96), or the most reliable Acts of the Martyrs, such as those of the Scyllitan martyrs or of Pionius or of Polycarpus, where the test of loyalty to the emperor is precisely the recognition of his cult.

After all, ordinary men took an oath to the emperor and his *genius* even in private transactions. We all remember the poor Alexandrian sailors who emotionally saluted the emperor, as Suetonius tells us: "per illum se vivere, per illum navigare." The poor sailors knew about Roman peace, if not about ruler-cult. But nothing is emotionally acceptable if it does not provoke contrasts, and it can hardly be doubted that the imperial cult gained from the existence of dubious characters, such as the Jews and the Christians, outsiders whether by birth or by choice, who did not worship the emperors. What happened to the imperial cult when the Christians conquered the Empire under Constantine and turned the tables on the pagans and the Jews is a story to which I shall soon return.

For now let me add that other sectional differences contributed to the imperial cult. The slaves who were entitled by law to take refuge near the statue of an emperor to protest against ill-treatment by their master or his injunction to prostitute themselves had their own emotional interest in the sacredness of these imperial statues. On the other hand, even a governor could seek refuge near the statue of his emperor when he was persecuted by rioters who wanted to burn him alive. (The story is told by Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*—I,15.) Rich people, as

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we know from so many inscriptions, found satisfaction in erecting their monuments in honor of the emperor. As there was scope for individual fancies and combinations, each donor had reasonable freedom in expressing his preference. He could worship the emperor alone or associate him with his favorite god. What can we say about those two Spaniards who chose or invented Aesculapius Augustus and Iuppiter Pantheus Augustus that crop up in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 2, 2004 and 2008?

Even better: there were theological questions about these newfangled gods, the emperors. How much were they affected by astrology? Correspondingly, could anyone endanger an emperor by getting hold of his horoscope? The story of how emperors were afraid of astrologers and of those who used the astrologers to learn about the destiny of emperors is a well-known one. Horoscopes of emperors were certainly made and preserved, whether retrospectively or not. The opinion we find in Firmicus Maternus in the fourth century that the emperor is not subject to the stars because his destiny is determined by higher authority (*Mathesis* 2, 30) is somewhat isolated, though not unique. Firmicus Maternus wrote that opinion when he was on the way to becoming a Christian. More frequently there was tension between astrology and worship of emperors as gods, and that again did no harm to the imperial cult. Theological difficulties have always contributed to making beliefs more interesting.

What we know about least is the pleasure that the various groups derived from setting up statues, building temples, performing sacrifices, composing speeches, arranging banquets to honor the sovereign or the *genius* of the sovereign or the gods connected with the sovereign. Athletes would be given prizes, musicians and poets would be employed, children and adolescents would be involved in performances. Each community and group had its own calendar; different military units would differ in their worship, as would different cities; but probably no one would have felt a complete stranger if he traveled from one military unit to the next or from one city to another. In the Hellenized provinces of the Empire, where the cult of local rulers had preceded the emperor's cult, ordinary people were confirmed in their habit of adding new gods to the old gods. In the provinces of Western Europe and Northern Africa people were offered the new pleasure of getting nearer to the gods through earthly divine rulers. Most remarkably, we even have some evidence, albeit vague, that H. W. Pleket collected years ago (in *Harvard Theological Review*, 58, 1965, 331 ff.) that some groups were treating the imperial cult as a mystery religion. In some inscriptions priests called *sebastophantai* appear: they seem to have the task of revealing some secrets about emperors. I wish we knew more about this.

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IV

Rule by the grace of God was the only form of rule compatible with the Christian faith: indeed there had been pagan emperors like Aurelian who had thought on those lines. But is it not difficult to see that the Christian emperors were in no hurry to eliminate the imperial cult. It had taken root, it had become an organic part of the relation between sovereign and subject: indeed, it indicated the exact point at which the subject felt himself to be a subject. Sacrifices, perhaps, had to be eliminated by Christian emperors. The ecclesiastical historian Philostorgius is explicitly critical of Christians who offered sacrifices to the statue of Constantine in Constantinople. When Constantine wrote his letter to the citizens of Hispellum in Umbria to authorize the building of a temple to himself and to his family, he had to stipulate that the cult should not be polluted by the deception of any contagious superstition. He must have meant sacrifices, though he did not say so. Another text, this time by Constantius in 341, makes it evident that Constantine had in fact tried to prevent "the madness of sacrifices," but the precise occasion is not indicated. The imperial cult, however reformed, went on.

We know that in the early sixth century there was still in the small African town Ammaedara a good man who was proud of calling himself *flamen perpetuus Christianus*, without realizing that there was some contradiction between *flamen* and *Christianus*. As G. W. Bowersock was quick to point out, what really minimized the importance of being "*divus*" for a Christian emperor was the chance of becoming "*sanctus*." Constantine himself was treated in the East like a saint, indeed like one of the apostles, soon after his death. When prayers for the performance of miracles began to be addressed to saints, paradoxically the last barrier which separated a deified emperor from an old Olympian god fell down, or at least was occasionally broken down. As has been well known since at least A. D. Nock's chapter on religion in *Cambridge Ancient History* X (1934), there is a characteristic absence of evidence that prayers were offered to emperors to perform a miracle (or even to induce a dream). Ex-voto inscriptions registering acts of grace by emperors after prayers to them are few and unclear for the three pagan centuries of the Empire.

To make things worse, there is some evidence that the boyfriend of Hadrian, Antinous, who was deified to please Hadrian, did accomplish miracles after his death. We have an explicit ex-voto in that sense from Bithynia. So a mere Antinous was better than the Emperor Hadrian in performing miracles after death. But it must be a consequence of the new atmosphere of the fourth century—when an emperor could perform miracles qua a saint—that even a pagan emperor became capable of authentic miracles after death. We learn from Libanius that worshippers

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were given miracles by Julian after his death. As A. D. Nock immediately perceived when M. P. Charlesworth directed his attention to that passage by Libanius, it must have been competition with Christian saints that endowed the dead Julian with such power.

Even Theodosius II, who took his Christianity seriously, still had to recognize in 425 the reality of the statues, images, and games for an emperor, though he wanted these honors "without the vainglorious heights of adoration." The limits between worship and homage remained unclear.

But we must consider the *adventus*, the moment when the emperor, usually remote and unseen, would become present to his subjects. The moment was solemn and therefore a frequent subject on monuments. Since 1938 we have had marble reliefs found beneath the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome that have been dated to the reign of Domitian. One panel presents Rome presiding over the *adventus* of the emperor Vespasian. But several other scenes of *adventus*—for Trajan, Hadrian, Marc Aurel, etc.—had been known before. The *adventus* of an emperor might happen in a moment of need, when his position was not yet safe. Such was the case of the *adventus* of Vespasian at Alexandria in 69. Tacitus notices that Vespasian was still lacking "auctoritas et maiestas." He acquired it there by performing miracles in collaboration with Serapis. He did not have the king's touch by right, as legitimate monarchs of later ages had: he was just lucky at that moment.

Normally, *adventus* was not an occasion for miracles, but for eloquence, rejoicing, and religious ceremonies. Eloquence for *adventus* was theorized, and we hear plenty about it in the third-century treatise by the rhetorician Menander—a book that has come back into fashion among classicists in recent years. But it is, perhaps, more important to refer to the long tradition of religious acts that would greet the visitor. It had of course precedents in the reception of Roman leaders in the provinces. Metellus Pius, we are told by Valerius Maximus, had his *adventus* in Spain greeted with altars and incense. Augustus tried to arrive incognito to avoid giving trouble. Sacrifices are noted by Suetonius for the *adventus* of the Emperor Gaius. They must have happened for almost every emperor who traveled about. If we know more about *adventus* in the third or fourth century, it is partly a question of sources: most of the imperial panegyrics belong to that period, and they are, as we have said, particularly sensitive to *adventus*. But it may well be that the new religious atmosphere, combined with the new military situation, gave *adventus* a greater, though perhaps different, share in the imperial ceremonial. We know from Ammianus that Julian was received in Antioch "like some divinity with public prayers." In any case, as the emperor was seldom in Rome in the fourth century, his appearance in

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Rome became a ceremony of special significance. Constantius's entry into Rome in 357 was memorably described by Ammianus; and we have one of the speeches written for the occasion by Themistius. According to Ammianus's description, Constantius "kept the gaze of his eyes straight ahead and turned his face neither to right nor left." He was seeing things rather than seeing people. Sabine MacCormack in *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* has already observed that there was in fact an increasing tendency, especially in figurative art, to emphasize the presence rather than the arrival of the emperor. How can we explain this?

One element is perhaps to be found in the new climate of modified emperor-worship by Christians. There was less one could do in terms of cultic ceremonies as such. The crowd could no longer take part in sacrifices or direct prayer. The crowd, therefore, tended to recede in the descriptions of the *adventus*—whether in literature or in monuments. There remained the emperor in a new solitude—present rather than arriving. But his presence was still, or perhaps more so, a divine presence: the presence of a lonely superior being. Thus the *adventus* was involved in the difficulties that surrounded the imperial cult in a Christian empire. For a while *adventus* and the modified imperial cult supported each other, in the sense that the *adventus* supplied the imperial cult with an immediate presence of the divine being, and the modified imperial cult supplied the *adventus* with something of the sanctity of the Christian sovereign. In the long run, both *adventus* and the imperial cult were doomed. The introduction of the patriarch into the ceremony of coronation (first perhaps with Leo I, in 457) made it definitely clear that the emperor could be a saint, but not a god.

People were again seriously believing in a god or gods. On the one hand, the emperors were no longer the victorious and efficient rulers they used to be; and, on the other, they were no longer felt to be an alien power where they were still ruling. The imperial cult was primarily a sign of indifference or doubt or anxiety about the gods; it was, furthermore, an expression of admiration for efficient, but alien, rule.

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Poisson d'Avril, or;
The Quintessential Russian Anecdote

PHILIP MURRAY

The Princesse Ouspenskaya y Tonnerre
Was twelve years older than the century in 1960
And she remembered in good English over tea
At the Ritz in Paris, a raw stormy day in Moscow.
(It must have been 1893.) A snow-powdered Tolstoy
Burst unannounced into her grandmother's drawing room
To shout "Tchaikovsky is dead!"

"Two great pearls of tears ran down his cheeks
And melted among others in his shaggy beard.
He was the largest dwarf I have ever seen,
So wizened and bony; like an ancient pilgrim,
With his soiled gray cape and mushroom felt hat.
I was a plump little girl by an immense fireplace,
Coloring my sketch of *un cheval, bleu.*

To ease his sorrow I offered him my blue horse—
Which he accepted, kissing me on the forehead
And pinching my bottom lightly. Then he asked me
Abruptly, 'Tatiana, do you believe in God?'
Grandmother intervened at once, to be sure.
'Leo Nicolaevich, she is but a child.'
After that, I am sorry to say, my governess led me away."

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A Yank at Oxford

Specializing for Breadth

DON K. PRICE

AS I TOOK THE TRAIN BACK TO NASHVILLE after being awarded a Rhodes Scholarship at a regional competition in Atlanta in December 1931, I was congratulating myself on my good luck and looking forward, for a wide variety of reasons, to going to Oxford the next autumn.

The more mundane reasons were financial. The scholarship then paid much more than the $75 a month I had been earning during the year since I had been graduated from Vanderbilt, and my future prospects as a reporter on the *Nashville Evening Tennessean*, a newspaper then in bankruptcy, with its publisher in the penitentiary, were not encouraging. The more idealistic reason, for one who had studied English literature at Vanderbilt under the Southern Agrarians, was to look forward to a leisurely education in a higher culture, the intellectual center of the world's preeminent imperial power.

I got the cultural exposure, as did the other American Rhodes Scholars who sailed on the SS *Carinthia* in September 1932, but for all of us it involved a culture shock. We were escaping the depression in the United States, though that had not yet made substantial changes in our political values. While at Oxford, however, we had to confront the revolutions of Stalin and Mussolini and Hitler. It was a shock for all of us, but especially for me, who had had enough trouble adapting to an academic metropolis like Nashville after coming from the Cumberland Mountains of Kentucky.

The culture shock hit us first, not in the formal teaching programs of the University, but in the physical environment and in the absence of any clear-cut rules to guide us in adapting to it. Many of the formal regulations were obsolete or irrelevant. When the University presented us with the book of the principal Oxford statutes—*Excerpta e Statutis*—we were not sure whether the Latin text of one of the 1636 statutes, still in force, was meant to be taken seriously: it prohibited any student from

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carrying either offensive or defensive weapons, by night or day, except a bow and arrows for purposes of honest recreation.

As we tried to understand Oxford and English culture, we received less help from written rules than from the practical living arrangements, and perhaps less from our academic tutors than from our fellow students and the college servants. As we settled in to the unfamiliar environment, and tried to adjust to a wet cold autumn with no central heating, our main impression was the contradiction of an old class system with a new democratic society. For nearly a century, Oxford had accepted students who were not Anglicans, yet every morning those of us who preferred to skip chapel service had to do an equivalent penance before breakfast by donning academic robes and signing a record book in the college office. Oxford cared much less about conventional morality than did small-town America, yet we were obliged to be in our colleges before the gates were locked at nine o'clock or sign in before midnight under the porter's scrutiny. As my tutor explained to his charges—"You Americans just don't understand; there is no rule against climbing over the walls into the college after midnight, but there is a very strict rule against getting caught climbing in after midnight."

It was hard to learn the code in a system that preferred to avoid formal rules, a preference that explained (I later came to believe) much of the difference between the British and American political systems. In this process of learning, our formal tutors, whose minds were on higher things, were less effective instructors than the "scouts," the college servants, who served breakfast and lunch in their private rooms to Americans accustomed to crowded dormitories and college cafeterias. The scouts were, for most of us, the tutors in the local customs. My scout that year, a man in his eighties, had been the scout for F. E. Smith, later the earl of Birkenhead, a great Tory politician, and whenever I needed a lesson in manners, he would report how Lord Birkenhead would have behaved a half century earlier.

Since I had earned part of my living at college by waiting on tables, I thought for a time that our relationship with the college servants typified the social system of a class-conscious society. But then, as I got to know my fellow students (and later to study British educational statistics), I began to understand that the system of municipal and state scholarship aid meant that there was little difference in family income between the college servants and many of the students. The students, I am sure, were consequently drawn from a wider range of economic class origins than those in my small private university in Tennessee.

They still tended, nevertheless, to follow the style of recreation and amusement that had been set by an earlier and more aristocratic era.

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This style was of course partly dictated by the climate. In a cold, wet English winter, with bedrooms entirely unheated and living rooms with smallish fireplaces, some vigorous sport was essential to maintain the circulation. In a university made up of more than twenty small colleges, it was easy for the Rhodes Scholar to find some opportunity for competitive sports.

Some Americans and Canadians took to sports in which they had experience at home—ice hockey, tennis, and the like. Others undertook to learn unfamiliar games like soccer or rugby or football. Not many managed to pick up the more esoteric skills of cricket. But the main sport, which was also a social event in the winter and spring, was rowing.

My own college, Merton, with fewer than two hundred students, put three eights on the river for the winter "torpid" races—clinker-built boats that could stand collision with occasional bits of floating ice. To fill up the third eight, they drafted any student of reasonably sound physique, and I found myself in what turned out to be the fifty-fifth boat on the river in the week of bumping races. The Isis River (better known outside of Oxford as the Thames) is too narrow to let boats race abreast, so they proceed in single file; and when a boat bumps its predecessor, they both drop out of the procession that day and the next day exchange places in the priority ranking.

The training regime for such a sport was a surprise to the puritanical American athlete. During the racing week, the crew would gather each morning for a breakfast of beefsteak and strong ale—no lager beer nonsense. And at the end of the week, especially if there had been some advancement in the "bumping" procession, the crews celebrated with a "bump supper," which was a surprise for Americans fresh from a Prohibition era. As other students came into Merton College late one evening after such a supper, the head porter admitted them with the warning, "Be careful as you go through the quadrangle, sir; the young gentlemen are throwing bottles, sir."

In those depression years, the American universities were not overcrowded, and their admission standards depended less on academic records than today. But Oxford and Cambridge were already more competitive, since an undergraduate educational record there was far more crucial for a subsequent teaching or professional career than in the United States. Students expecting to go into business did not feel obliged, socially, to attend a university; the "public" schools were an adequate passport to upper-class status.

As for those hoping to enter academic careers, however, the B.A. degree record was their supreme test. Unlike American universities, the British had refused to imitate the German system of advanced research

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leading to the Ph.D. as an academic passport. For those students intent on university appointments, a First Class Honours degree seemed a necessity. Such a record depended entirely on the final examinations at the end of three to five years of work. There was no system of grades or tests each term or each year to give a student confidence in his progress.

Without such a frequent report card or grades in various subjects, the student lived for two years or more in a relaxed atmosphere, in which it was fashionable to pretend (like the remnants of the aristocracy who were taking "pass" rather than Honours degrees) that Oxford was an entertaining social experience. After all, since the undergraduate was in residence for only three eight-week terms, most serious study could be done during the vacations—a reversal of American habits. But then, at the end, everything depended on the exams—the final "Honours Schools," with two three-hour written exams each day for six days. On those exams, in which a First Class degree went to only between a tenth and a fifth of all candidates, future university appointments largely depended.

The British generally do not share Americans' prejudice in favor of a separation of powers, but in the university world they separate two powers in a way that American professors refuse to do. Our teachers, we soon learned, would not be our examiners. The examination papers would be read and graded by professors to whom the students were anonymous. The system prevented individual teachers from building up their small cults of specialists, and strengthened national standards of scholarship. But the ordeal of a week of examinations on which one's future career heavily depended seemed almost unbearable.

This ordeal was intensified by the shortage of academic tenure openings. When, during the depression and then the war, some of my English friends failed to get the immediate tenure teaching positions that I expected for them, they had to look elsewhere for work.

Among my Merton College friends in the Modern History Honours School, for example, one English student took a distinguished First Class—rumor had it that his was the best exam in that subject that year. He then had a distinguished scholarship that supported his research in Oxford and then in New Zealand. After that, I assumed he would immediately get a tenure teaching appointment at Oxford, but he had to settle for a junior lectureship at Liverpool and another Oxford research fellowship until the outbreak of the war. He then went promptly into military service, winding up as a brigadier and General Montgomery's chief of intelligence. After he spent some time in postwar service at the United Nations, Oxford opened up for him, and he became a don at Balliol. His distinguished career continued when he became the editor

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of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and, later, Secretary to the Rhodes Trust—Sir Edgar Williams.

Another English friend took, as I did, a second-class degree; he could find no academic job, at either the school or university level, in the English-speaking world, so he wound up teaching English at a secondary school on the island of Hokkaido, Japan. After several years in that rather menial occupation, he had become fluent in Japanese, and at the outbreak of the war he managed to return home and get into military intelligence work. With the return of peace, he found himself in demand for research and teaching, published a book on Japanese secret societies, and wound up running a Japanese studies program at St. Antony's College, Oxford, becoming before his death an Oxford professor—G. R. Storry.

It was fortunate for me that American careers did not demand standards as uniformly high as the British, and that the boundaries between the careers of journalism, government administration, and universities were so permeable.

The same Honours Schools examinations that were such a competitive strain on my British friends meant very little to me or my future career, except as a subject to study for its relation to governmental affairs. For, these same examinations, of course, were the important test for entry into the other career open to all classes—the civil service. Indeed, the need for a test for competitive entry into the reformed civil service had been, in the mid-nineteenth century, a strong influence in raising the standards of the universities' examinations.

It began to dawn on me slowly that all this pressure came from the union of Oxford and Cambridge with the leadership of the political system of the country in a way that was different from that in America. It was the basis of the British "Establishment," although we then never used that word. While American universities prepared their students for leadership in business and the specialized arts and sciences and professions, they tended to shun any sense of responsibility for the control of the political system or the conduct of its general administration. In my own university, Vanderbilt, the fashionable intellectual leadership had been the Agrarian conservatives; their dominant political approach had been to dodge responsibility for national administration almost as conscientiously as, say, the 1930s graduates of the Harvard Business School.

But at Oxford it was not only the radicals—like some of the Balliol economists who were keenly dedicated to grafting a MacDonald socialist policy onto British parliamentary democracy—who were interested in strengthening the public service. The general run of All Souls conserva-

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tives of the Stanley Baldwin stripe were equally willing to assume some degree of commitment to public careers. Conservatives might embrace laissez-faire economics, but they were no more inclined than socialists to think that politics was a dirty game to be shunned by gentlemen, or that the civil service was a career for inferior talent.

In several ways the formal education system reinforced this social pressure in favor of a sense of personal responsibility for public affairs, rather than commitment to some esoteric branch of scholarship. First, the student was considered responsible for learning what he needed to know; second, he was pressed to learn not only the content of his subjects, but how to communicate that content fluently and persuasively to others; and third, he found that a curriculum that seemed to Americans to be highly specialized in structure was designed to force him to generalize broadly rather than to look into his subject with narrower and narrower focus.

First, let us consider the student's personal responsibility. I had come from a college where attendance at classes was required and recorded. The professor checked the class list at each session, and those who cut were penalized. At Oxford I was shocked to discover that no one knew whether I was attending or not. I tried a few lectures during the first month, found them dull and discouraging, and for the rest of the year went to not more than a half-dozen sessions in all. I came to believe that the lectures were useful only to the student who had little scholarly ambition and was content with a passing degree. But I must not exaggerate the intellectual side of the problem. The lecture rooms (which often were the college dining halls) were generally unheated, and the effort to take notes with chilled fingers during the English winter seemed to be something to be avoided if at all possible.

The alternative was to resort to books. Oxford libraries were then not up to American standards in mechanical efficiency: the great Bodleian collection had no card catalogue, and the researcher had to paw through tremendous volumes in which a slip for each book might be found pasted to a page in alphabetical order by the author's name. The difficulty of using such library collections led us to buy for ourselves more books than we could afford, and many an American student learned the virtues of Blackwell's bookstore as an intellectual resource.

When we had to undertake research for a special paper or a research degree that was outside the standard fields in an Honours School, we found self-reliance an even greater necessity. In my third year I undertook a B.Litt. degree, which required no class work or examinations but only the preparation of a thesis. I expected my supervisor to follow my work each week and instruct me in the formal mechanics of scholarship, ranging from punctuation to bibliographies—the kind of

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detail that the *Chicago Manual of Style* has made notorious. Nothing of the kind occurred: he interviewed me three or four times during the entire year, with great attention to the fundamental issues involved in my research, and left me on my own to find the source materials. Most of them were not in Oxford, so I had to commute to London to dig them out of the records of several government ministries and branches of the British Museum.

Along with this sense of personal responsibility for learning went, second, an obligation to communicate the results clearly and persuasively to others, and not merely to those interested in an esoteric specialty. When I was told that the principal teaching method for the B.A. would be a weekly tutorial, requiring the writing of an essay on some assigned subject, I thought I had been well prepared by nearly two years of American journalism. I was shocked to discover that I had to meet a much higher standard of composition and rhetoric. These words perhaps suggest a concern for proficiency in prose that is detached from substance, but that is not at all my point. My tutor's main concern was neither with the mechanics of prose nor with the accuracy of facts, but whether the facts were interpreted in a way that developed their broader significance.

For each weekly session, the tutor would have a small group of three or four students assemble to listen to each one read his paper aloud, and then debate its content, subject to his own criticism. Nothing in this procedure was less satisfactory than mere facts; I kept reflecting on the contrast to the mechanical grading of short-answer examinations in the United States. The tutorial method was the best preparation for the kind of test we would face in the final Honours School examinations. Each of those three-hour exams would list perhaps twenty questions, and a student was expected to choose only three or four to answer, each one by an essay. Our tutor advised us to spend at least an hour of our time, not in writing, but in thinking about what we wanted to say. I will never forget the first question I encountered in the exam on the modern European history period, in which much attention was paid to the French Revolution: "*Felix opportunitate mortis*. To what extent might this be said of Mirabeau?"

All of this emphasis on clear communication rather than factual knowledge was of course related to the third aspect I noted: the issue of specialization. My first impression was that Oxford was dreadfully specialized.

For my Vanderbilt A.B. degree, I was required to have credits in each of the main branches of knowledge—science, humanities, and so on. The Oxford undergraduate, by contrast, had to choose a particular field—Modern History, or English Language and Literature, or Jurisprudence,

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or Chemistry. He had no opportunity to take work outside that field.

On the other hand, with certain exceptions—such as the natural sciences (which did not fit very comfortably into the college system and which I had no real opportunity to observe)—each Honours School subject was not confined to a narrow discipline, but rather brought several of them together in ways that emphasized the need to interpret their interconnection with respect to broad human and political issues. I had originally intended to enter the program called "Modern Greats," more formally Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, because its breadth appealed to me as a would-be journalist. But the head tutor at Merton pointed out to me that in a very small college there was no tutor to guide me in that field. Besides, he added, Oxford had been giving that subject for only a quarter century or so and hadn't yet had time to learn how to teach it well. The obvious course was to enroll in his field, Modern History.

I was soon surprised to learn that the field was not defined as narrowly as I feared, in either breadth or depth. "History" included political philosophy, constitutional law, and some economics. "Modern" meant beginning with the Roman occupation of Britain and ending in 1870. Anyone interested in more recent or current political developments turned to the great variety of organizations that brought students together from all over the University to discuss contemporary issues—clubs for Tories and Socialists and Communists (the "October Club" of the Communists was the liveliest of the lot, and it brought to its meetings a great many quite conservative students who enjoyed the entertainment of its debates). Other clubs within the individual colleges were likely to deal only in a general way with politics and to include other interests such as literature or the arts, so that their membership would comprehend those enrolled in the whole range of formal subjects. For politics and public affairs, however, the most notable forum was the Oxford Union, a debating society with a procedure modeled on that of the House of Commons, whose sessions sometimes included leading speakers from Parliament itself, engaging in debates with undergraduates seeking to follow their career examples.

In encouraging this breadth of intellectual interest and its concern for practical affairs, the most influential field of academic study was the one that I was least prepared to expect—the classics. For four years in an old-fashioned Kentucky high school and in my first year at Vanderbilt, I had taken courses in Latin. These courses meant to me learning to conjugate verbs and decline nouns, and perhaps to appreciate the cadence of Virgil's hexameters. They never suggested the slightest relevance to branches of knowledge outside linguistics and literature, or any concern with what had happened in the world since the Fall of Rome—or even

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any interest in the general history of the Roman Empire. But the classics at Oxford meant something very different. The program in "Greats"—*Literae Humaniores*—was supposed to be the most demanding in the curriculum. It required one more year of study than the other Honours Schools, and it dealt with philosophy, literature, and history, and anything else having to do with Greek and Roman civilization, and with modern issues as well.

It was a surprise to me to discover that my English fellow students who were doing Greats were not necessarily retreating into the academic cloister, but might be choosing that field of study as the way into public life. One such contemporary at Merton, for example, took a distinguished first-class degree, then received an Oxford fellowship, but decided to go instead into the civil service. He entered it in good time to have an adventurous wartime experience, and eventually to rise to the position of Secretary to the Cabinet and Clerk of the Privy Council, one of the two top jobs in the career system. In this position, he did much to encourage the support of the sciences and their application to the processes of policy decision. On his retirement from government he was rewarded with a life peerage and (as Lord Trend) became the head of Lincoln College, Oxford, and chairman of the board of the British Museum.

Another Oxford contemporary, whom I never met as an undergraduate there, took his first-class degree in Greats, went into the civil service, and became the head of the civil service. When an official committee chaired by Lord Fulton recommended in 1968 that the civil service contained too few scientists in its higher ranks, and that they should be combined into the same grading system as those with more general administrative responsibilities, he was put in charge of carrying out those recommendations, which went against the traditions of the career establishment. In the opinion of the enthusiastic supporters of the Fulton proposals, his opposition typified the obsolete attitudes of those with a classical education to the needs of modern government.

All of that, however, was still far in the future. I came later to share much of the Fulton committee's impatience with the traditional civil-service approach. But in the mid-1930s the question that interested me was not whether the government attracted and promoted the right mix of university graduates with the right variety of training, but whether it could recruit and keep first-class graduates at all for public service.

The emphasis on breadth and generalization (as well as clear communication) in the Greats program had clearly had the effect of encouraging such recruitment. So was the similar emphasis on the newer fields of study, most notably Modern History and Modern Greats, which had become strong competitors of Greats for civil-service preparation. Only

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slowly did I begin to learn the significance of this issue in the history of Oxford. In the eighteenth century, Oxford and Cambridge, as bastions of the established church, were intellectual backwaters, and the newer fields of learning, especially the sciences, were progressing quite rapidly in some of the provincial seats of learning, most of them outside the universities' system. The challenge of the Continental, and especially the German, universities in the nineteenth century forced a reexamination of the system.

Two university commissions were set up by the government in the 1850s and 1870s. They emphasized such specific reforms as admitting students who were not Anglicans and permitting faculty members to marry. But the broader implicit question was whether the role of the university should be mainly to serve as a shelter for the promotion of learning or as a training ground for the service of the state.

On this issue Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol, had taken the lead in favor of making the educational system serve the purposes of the state. He and his followers had seen how a system of competitive examinations for British graduates had created a new kind of higher civil service for India. As the British civil service was being reformed, it was imperative both to have an educational system that would qualify graduates for its competitive examinations and to encourage these graduates to apply to the civil service. The Indian civil-service experience laid the basis for the new system in the United Kingdom. Jowett put great emphasis on the study of Plato in order to produce in students an "inexpert" intelligence and, perhaps even more, a sense of public obligation. He had great contempt for the Manchester school of economics and its laissez-faire theories, and his appointment of Arnold Toynbee as a tutor for candidates for the Indian civil service was intended to give their training in economics a more humanitarian outlook than the mathematical frigidity of the Manchester economists.

This general outlook had persisted to the time I was at Oxford. Maurice Bowra, then a tutor and later (as Sir Maurice) the head of Wadham College, liked to emphasize that the Greats program "teaches a man to think in more than one way and, if he masters its techniques, his mind should be so disciplined that he can apply it to all manner of subjects, which need not have any direct connection with his studies." It was this conception of a general intelligence and a sense of public obligation that was most admirable in the Oxford approach to university education and in the Whitehall approach to the higher civil service—and the two had evolved together in a mutually reinforcing way.

Both Oxford and Whitehall have their weaknesses, particularly in dealing with the newer forms of scientific knowledge, which makes it impossible in government to appraise the effects of new policies without

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understanding their technological potential. It is hard to guess which are more shortsighted in their policies—the British because they are dominated by generalists who deliberate on them in secret, or the Americans because they are led by specialists who judge policies on the basis of today's television commentators. But that kind of question was not in my mind in the 1930s; instead I found the greatest challenge to my imagination to be a country in which a substantial proportion of the ablest university graduates were recruited by the government for a permanent nonpartisan career and, what is more, were eager to assume its obligations.

It is hard to say how much this tradition influenced the American Rhodes Scholar. The depression and the Second World War must have made me and my contemporaries receptive to it. Of the American Rhodes Scholars of my year, more than three-quarters were in active government service later in their careers, if wartime experience is to be counted; if we leave the war years out, almost a half were in full-time government service at one time or another, and might have stayed in it if the system had made it possible.

What Jowett tried to do at Oxford in the way of educating students for government service is left in the American university, with its radically different pattern of professional education, to schools of government or public service or public administration. Among the leading schools of that kind, old Rhodes Scholars have, at one time or another, headed those of Princeton, Syracuse, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Harvard—I list them offhand from memory—and at Harvard three of the four successive deans of the school of government have been Oxonians.

No one could say how much this inclination to government service came from the formal educational system of Oxford, or from the experience of study and travel abroad in a period of tremendous turbulence and excitement. I am inclined to think that Americans learn more than the English from an Oxford education, just as the English would learn more than Americans from study at a university in the United States. The Harkness Fellowship Program of the Commonwealth Fund has apparently agreed with this principle, as it brings British students to America, and it furnishes them a generous allowance of time and money to travel throughout the United States. As for my own experience as a Rhodes Scholar, I found the opportunity for travel each year—in the twenty-eight weeks of freedom left after the three eight-week terms—to be a great intellectual stimulus.

There was ample incentive to travel for other than intellectual motives. The British pound was still relatively strong, and most Continental currencies had been devalued, so living was cheaper across the Channel. It needed to be, since the scholarship then paid a total of four

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hundred pounds a year, which had to cover all university fees and all travel and living expenses for the year. During my first sixteen-week summer, 1933, I wandered through a half-dozen countries across Europe, and the total living and travel cost amounted to twenty-one dollars a week, a necessarily economical standard made possible by third-class rail travel and living in the cheapest of pensions.

This kind of travel opened up the metropolitan culture of Europe to a young American who had never heard a symphony orchestra except on phonograph records and who had never spent any time in a major art museum. I had never been in New York, or for that matter seen the Atlantic Ocean, until I traveled to take up my Oxford scholarship. During the long vacations, the chance to visit the art galleries lured me to most of the great cities of the Continent, from Madrid to Leningrad. Almost as impressive as the great masterpieces were the small towns where the old culture had left a strong imprint on the architecture and family habits of the people. During the spring holiday before our final Honours School examinations, for example, I went with my tutor and his wife and a fellow student for a stay in the old abbey of Pontigny, France, which had been converted into a center for the study of French history. That history came to seem more real to me when immersed in the architecture and rural society of Burgundy.

Such interests faded in comparison as the political conflicts of the prewar years intensified. Munich in December of 1932 still had much of its Bavarian *Gemütlichkeit,* but the great beer halls were becoming tense as Adolf Hitler continued his campaign to seize power. I went to several of his rallies, and I did not need a fluent command of German to understand his message, which the violence of his rhetoric and his bombastic gestures made all too obvious. By the next summer, when I went to Berlin, he had taken power. I was there with two other Rhodes Scholars, Dean Rusk and James McCormack, whose later careers in government (Rusk in military service as well as the State Department, and McCormack, as an Air Force general, in the Atomic Energy Commission as well as in the Pentagon) must have carried throughout their careers the vivid memory of SS men pushing foreigners as well as Germans around in the streets as the Nazis mobilized the masses. My own general objections to an obscene political doctrine took on specific form when I learned that German friends who had taken me snowshoeing through the Bavarian mountains the previous Christmas, who had made no secret of their dislike of the Nazis, had disappeared without a trace after Hitler took power in January.

The thorough and methodical approach of Nazi tyranny made the earlier brand of fascism in Italy seem, by contrast, like *opéra bouffe;* when we wanderers had heard Mussolini in one of his public appear-

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ances, the whole occasion (as much as we disliked the content of his oratory) seemed slightly comic. We could not have been more wrong in our estimate of its significance.

In the summer of 1934, I joined a group of Rhodes Scholars for a trip to the Soviet Union—among them Howland Sargeant (later to become an assistant secretary of state and the head of Radio Liberty, and still later, until his death in 1984, the director of the Harkness Fellowship program) and Charles J. Hitch (later an assistant secretary of defense and the principal economist of the Rand Corporation, then, later still, president of the University of California). We took a small Soviet ship that sailed from London Bridge to Leningrad. Most of our fellow passengers were Scottish Communist Party members from Glasgow on a pilgrimage to the shrines of their faith. Their zeal for the classless society was somewhat dimmed by our quarters and our diet aboard ship; it was, of course, officially classless, but we were in the third "category," where our meals seemed to consist largely of rather moldy black bread and eggs that were past their prime, and, in the rough weather of the North Sea, so many of the Glasgow delegation were seasick that we were spared their evangelism.

Within Russia, one of Howland Sargeant's boyhood friends from New Bedford had become the first Catholic priest permitted to function in the Soviet Union, in his case as chaplain to the new American embassy. With an official car at his disposal, he gave our group a tour of the countryside around Moscow, stopping here and there for chats with rural workingmen. Since we saw no collective farms, the farmers we visited were by no means well informed about party doctrine or agricultural policy. In remarkably free conversations, they generally said that the only difference they had noted about the change from czarist to Communist rule was that the government agents were now collecting rather more from them in taxes than in an earlier era. But that was a long time ago, before the purges and in a period far more tolerant and relaxed in its supervision of foreign visitors than in later years.

All such exposure to the growing crisis in world affairs gave a sense of foreboding to the research thesis I undertook in my final year at Oxford. It dealt with an apparently pedestrian topic—a comparison of the administrative systems of British and American governments—but as I worked on it, I was oppressed by the fear that an American system that found a depression more than it could manage might not be up to the challenge of a great world conflict. It was a feeling that was to haunt me for the rest of my active career.

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The Golden Age of Eccentricity

VIRGINIA WETHERBEE

ONE OF THE MOST PHILOSOPHICAL REMARKS he ever heard, said William James, was made by a repairman working at James's house. "There is very little difference between one man and another when you go to the bottom of it," the workman told him. "But what little there is, is very important."

I learned philosophy at my father's knee. However slight the difference between him and other men, this difference was something to be reckoned with. The word for Father, when I was old enough to spell it, was "eccentric." In the New England town where we lived, Father, a young surgeon with a growing practice, was notorious. He made himself felt at all times, nowhere more than at home in the confines of a small house with more inhabitants than were, by reasonable standards, desirable.

If all the world's a stage, our house was a thriving repertory theater with a large resident company of relatives, servants, dogs, cats, and chickens. Father was financial angel, producer, business manager, director, and leading man. As a small child my role was not, as you might think, the Infant Phenomenon or junior spear-carrier, but Banquo's ghost—that is, a character outside the main action but ever present in spirit, looking on wide-eyed at what I see now was an extraordinary production.

When I was a year old and my brother three, our mother died. After a series of housekeepers who came and went with the speed to make one wonder, Father turned, in his distress, to his relatives, of whom as one of eight children he had an inexhaustible supply. Aunts, uncles, cousins—all responded admirably, helping to run the house, Father's office, and, before long, the small hospital he and his younger brother, an ear, eye, nose and throat specialist, had opened. (Unable, ever, to accept rule and regulation, Father had quarreled with the administration of the hospital where he operated and left to start his own.)

Living in close quarters with an eccentric and his entourage had

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drawbacks; chiefly, there was no place to hide, though I tried: in the bramble bushes alongside the house; in the clothes hamper, the displaced laundry naively heaped on the floor nearby; underneath the round dining-room table whose white cloth hung to the floor. No matter. Father would ferret me out for one or other of his enthusiasms that waxed and waned with his phases. Worst of all was to "go for a ride." He had a lifelong affair with cars. He was proud and possessive, lavishing attention and affection on his current inamorata, but fickle; after a year or so, he heartlessly traded her in for a new one. Some of my earliest memories are of being snatched out of bed in the middle of the night to go riding, for Father frequently took his show on the road, playing the provinces as it were.

In those days, surgeons clustered in the cities around the large hospitals, and rural patients had to go to them. Father changed that. He went regularly to outlying small towns to the office of a country doctor or the local hospital to see difficult cases—if necessary, to operate on them. For these expeditions (and all others) Father filled his car with an assortment of relatives, cooks, off-duty nurses from the hospital, and, invariably, my brother and me. During these country office calls we all sat in the car and waited. Occasionally Father would be sent for at night by one of these general practitioners for an emergency, and a carful—including me—would be routed from bed to accompany him. A cousin and fellow rider of the time tells me that on these midnight rides Father carried a gun.

Such trips were for me nightmares. Half-asleep, rolling along at a steady thirty-five miles an hour, listening to the monotonous hissing of the tires on the road, I always got carsick and threw up, usually before we left the city limits. Father ignored me, as well he could since I was in the back seat and someone else had to cope with the mess. As I got older, my intransigence (as he considered it) began to irritate him. But it was his own fault. Before setting out on a long trip—say to Maine or Vermont or Canada, which at thirty-five miles an hour was a *long* trip—always at around 2:30 A.M., he insisted I eat "a good breakfast." The results were predictable. His solution was, not to leave me at home, as I begged him to do, but to put me out of the car to walk behind it until my stomach "settled." On one trip through the White Mountains, I trudged up and down the narrow, winding road for so long that Father's attention lapsed, and, when finally he looked in the rearview mirror, I had disappeared. Noticing a group of people way off the road, I had walked over to see what they were looking at—a famous flume, and, shortly, an irate man collaring his wayward daughter.

There was simply no respite from Father. Out of sight was not out of mind. He found me one night in my room doing homework. "Come!"

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The usual summons. I followed him down to the library where a table was set up with a chessboard. I had never heard of chess. Father identified the pieces, explained the rules, and said, "Play!" Finally, tentatively, I moved a pawn. "Aha!" He flipped through the pages of his book—in German—to the diagram detailing the response to my opening gambit and, of course, beat me soundly. From then on, every night Father sat me down to play chess with him. My homework suffered. I offered my teachers a variety of excuses but had better sense than to offer the truth. I was saved the ignominy of flunking out of junior high school by an amiable friend of Father's who took over my nightly duty.

What a psychiatrist would make of my childhood I do not know and will not ask. At the time, it seemed ordinary. I remember the very occasion when the thought did occur to me that my home life might be "different."

When I began junior high school I made new friends from other sections of town, and one of them asked me to lunch. In our neighborhood, with children running in and out of each other's houses all day long, such an invitation meant sitting on somebody's back steps with a sandwich, cookies, and milk. At Marion's house, however, I was told to wash my hands and sit down at the dining-room table with my friend, an only child, her father and mother, and her grandmother who lived with them. The food was odd, and there was no bread on the table. They were German, a quiet, methodical family (the icicles on their Christmas tree were put on one by one in exact sequence on each branch), and we ate in virtual silence. Why should this uneventful meal have so deeply engraved itself on my mind that after more than fifty years, like Simonides, I can remember where everybody was sitting?

"Let me call your attention to the curious incident of the dog in the night time," said Sherlock Holmes on a well-known occasion.
"The dog did nothing in the night time."
"That was the curious incident," replied Holmes.

At that memorable lunch, nothing happened.

Far from blighting the rest of my life, as you might think, the turmoil in which I grew up left me with a tolerance for, a joy in, eccentricity. (My three favorite personalities are Socrates, Samuel Johnson, and Nero Wolfe, each, happily, with his own Boswell.) A solemn child, I silently noted and filed away the oddities around me. There were a lot of them to note. Today, as I wander up and down the streets of my old neighborhood, past the innocent-looking houses, I could tell tales of mysterious events and strange characters. One of my favorites at the time, perhaps because I felt an affinity between us, was an elderly woman who was a familiar sight, out walking, day after day, followed at a certain distance

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by her long, black limousine with liveried chauffeur. Out for our inevitable, miserable Sunday drives, on remote country roads, rain or shine, summer or winter, we would often come upon this small, solitary figure and her faithful chauffeur.

Even my teachers were not of the common mold. One of them kept a battle-axe in her closet. Knowing it was there, as Samuel Johnson said of the man who knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, concentrated the mind wonderfully. Living among quirky people spoiled me. I grew to depend on it, like the capriciousness of New England weather. Goethe spoke to my condition: "Nothing is harder to bear than a succession of fair days." Of course, as long as I was in Father's vicinity, say, within one hundred miles, I did not have to worry; any storm he stirred up drenched me.

When I married and moved far, far away, I went off resigned to a new life "within normal limits," but my luck held. Wherever my husband and I lived, it was "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*" For a lovely time, we lived in an apartment house with nine characters in search of George Kaufman and Moss Hart. There were four apartments: upstairs, our landlady with her family, and an ex-ballet dancer, her elderly mother, and overactive dog; downstairs, a woman missionary with her son and daughter, and us.

Each member of the missionary family was well over six feet tall. They had recently escaped from China, leaving the father, also a missionary, in a Japanese prison camp there. The apartment was cluttered with huge chests of mysterious oriental paraphernalia, half-unpacked as, with unquenchable Christian optimism, they expected at any moment to be "called" back. In the meantime, the mother, an impassive, Brobdingnagian Madame Defarge, chilled my blood with tales, such as that she had routinely observed, from the windows of their erstwhile house, hapless Chinese being marched down the street to the nearby intersection, made to kneel, and beheaded. The son had a young man's fancy for long, hot showers that drained the building's inadequate hot-water system and earned him a lecture from the landlady.

I received the same lecture—unfairly, since my husband was the culprit. It was my first summons, my first meeting with our landlady. Going about my business in my apartment one day, I kept imagining I heard my name being called. Loud, strange thumps were followed by a distant "Mrs. Wetherbee! Come here!" I tracked the sounds upstairs and cautiously, on command, entered the landlady's apartment. An old woman, very heavy, in a large, indeterminate dress, sat sternly on a chair holding the cane with which she summoned miscreant tenants. I dutifully submitted to the lesson on how to take a shower: turn on a little water, get wet all over, turn the water off, soap myself, turn on a little

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water, rinse off quickly. My attention was distracted by a row of brown shopping bags lined along one wall, full of all the carefully sorted trash of the building: potato peelings separate, miscellaneous garbage, paper, cans, etc. Dismissed after the lecture, I left, shutting the door tightly behind me, having been forewarned by the ballet dancer. Otherwise, she complained, as soon as she opened *her* door, her little dog made a dash for the paper bags, scattering peelings, trash, and embarrassment in every direction.

The old lady was the widow of an army officer. Both her daughters were physicians, but neither practiced. One served as our janitor; the other, artistically inclined, did the painting and repairs. There was a son, gray-haired, scrawny, and perhaps a little retarded, who escaped every morning, and no amount of cane-thumping and shouting could bring him back before he was ready. My husband discovered him one day in a secluded corner on the campus of a nearby college, stretched out under a tree reading a magazine.

Don, my husband, had decided to go to medical school and was taking science and language courses to fulfill requirements. As he arrived home from lab one afternoon, Henrietta, the janitor-daughter, met him with a prospective patient, a chicken, one of several she and her sister kept in the backyard. Since there were no city collections of trash, each house had an open, smoldering garbage pit along an alley behind its garage. Rats the size of cats prowled around the pits and sometimes the yard, so at night the chickens were placed for safekeeping in the trunk of the family car. This chicken had been caught by a marauding rat and had a large, gaping wound in its side. Don examined the victim sympathetically but declined surgery, pointing out that he was at the moment a *pre*-medical student. Henrietta finally took care of the matter herself. She pulled the two sides of the wound together and fastened them with a large safety pin. The patient recovered health and spirits but walked with a bad limp.

One of the chickens wandered out into the alley and was run over by a car. Shortly after the accident, the building was filled with the aroma of cooking chicken, and in due time each tenant received a chicken pie. Don and I consulted with the ballet dancer. Eating the pie was unthinkable, but what to do with it? If we threw it into the garbage, Henrietta would find it. We finally put the pies into a box and tied it securely. After dark, Don and I went out cruising up and down back alleys until we found a garbage pit far enough from home—and Henrietta's vigilant eye—to deposit the box safely.

Parting from such company was a sorrow indeed, but wherever we went I managed to find enough characters to keep me happy. (During lulls, I could always visit Father.) They were of both sexes and all ages.

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The youngest was six and lived at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, where my husband was stationed with the army. Sam, the son of a major living in the ground-floor apartment alongside ours, early on caught the endemic cowboy fever. His everyday outfit was a cowboy hat, cowboy boots, a holster with gun around his waist, and nothing else—a reasonable solution to the unbearable Texas heat. Our bedroom was small with no fan, no air-conditioning, no cross ventilation. To feel any passing breath of air, I slept with my standard-issue army cot against the screened window. One morning, lying on my side, I opened my eyes to see Sam standing there, pointed gun pressed against the screen inches from my nose. "Put 'em up," he said quietly.

Eccentricity, like humor, is easier to appreciate than to define. The peculiar has to be separated out, as well as the plain mad. Dictionaries speak of behavior that is unconventional, deviating from the norm, unusual, irregular. To me, a longtime student of the phenomenon, the essential element is *au fond* a reasonable attempt to cope with the vagaries and vexations of life.

Father, vexed by the inevitable disarray of a house with too many occupants, tacked up signs everywhere. "Turn this light out!" "Put this cover down!" "Turn this faucet off!" "Keep this door shut!" "Leave this clean! Use elbow grease!" (I went looking for the jar.) Now, as a grandmother of eight lively youngsters whose visits are inevitably followed by visits from the plumber, the electrician, the washing-machine repairman, and the dishwasher repairman, I think Father's signs seem a sensible way to attack the problem, even if rather like tilting at entropy with a lance. At the time, the signs all over the house seemed to me as normal as the kitchen sink—until I saw the expression on the face of a boyfriend on his first visit.

I know that expression well. Just before Pearl Harbor, my husband and I bought our first car, a black Ford convertible with red leather seats. Later, as the war went on and on, gas rationing began. The amount of gas we were allowed to buy did not warrant registering the car, so for the duration it sat on blocks in the garage. When we could drive it again, it was still like new. That did not last long after Don began his internship at the Boston City Hospital. Along with internal medicine, he learned about human nature—specifically, that any belongings not firmly attached to one's person were going to be stolen. He had an assigned room where he slept—if he was lucky—when on night call. His overnight bag was stolen. His shirt was stolen. His pajamas were stolen. His shaving kit was stolen. I put his razor, shaving cream, toothbrush, and toothpaste in a paper bag. The paper bag was stolen.

And our car, parked on a side street near the hospital, was stolen—by joyriders, the police said, who slit the canvas roof, reached in to unlock

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the door, jumped the ignition and took off, abandoning the car later in Dorchester. We taped together the slashed roof, and Don found a place to park in front of the hospital under a street light. The car was stolen again. This time, it came back with a new slash in the roof, no radio, and no heater. We put on more tape, ignored all the hanging wires, and resigned ourselves to doing without listening to the Red Sox games and to freezing. From then on, I drove Don to work. The car roof, beset by slashers and New England weather, leaked in many places (over the driver's seat for one). Rain splashed down on my glasses. Over the front passenger seat was an even bigger leak. When sitting there, I took to holding an open umbrella over my head. During a downpour one morning, Don drove into a gas station, rolled down the window and told the attendant to put in a dollar's worth. The man stood transfixed, staring at me sitting snugly under my umbrella. He could not see that my feet were wrapped up with a hot water bottle.

Well, as Mr. Bennet asked, "For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbors and laugh at them in our turn?"

I have not had my turn for some time now. Eccentrics seem to be in short supply. The Golden Age is over. When first I became aware of this, I blamed myself: for getting old, for losing my sense of the ridiculous. But there is indeed a scarcity. A visit to my husband's hometown confirmed it.

When I went to live there after my marriage, the Mississippi River town was small, deeply Southern, rather like an extended-family settlement where everyone, for better or worse, knew everyone else's business. Don had grown up among town fathers so colorful that books could be written about them and, in fact, have been. When I arrived, entertainment was still easy to come by. I had only to sit on my mother-in-law's front porch in a rocking chair under the ceiling fan and watch the parade go by: Father Thomas, the priest for the Catholic convent next door, slowly walking past at the same time each day on his way to the corner movie theater for the matinée Western; the elderly Simpson sisters, stepping out of a Tennessee Williams dream in their long dresses, big hats, white gloves in one-hundred-degree heat, coming to call; old Mr. George, "the most boring man in town," also, unfortunately, coming to call. We spotted him first one afternoon, and the family, without a word, as one, dropped to the floor and on hands and knees crawled into the house to hide in a back room, leaving Don's mother sputtering in vain. Don's mother herself, two hundred pounds and fruitlessly counting calories, with enough talent and drive to run General Motors, but restricted to managing any local affairs she could get her hands on. (After her death, we found in her papers a copy of her letter to Harry Truman asking him, as one President to another, to address the Alice Bell Garden

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Club. His polite letter in reply begged off because of pressing business—World War II.)

With my husband's and my generation, there was little to laugh about. Down on the levee is a large billboard with the names of the young men who left after Pearl Harbor, many starred, the ones who did not come back. Today the beautiful little town has become a small city, its center run-down, deserted for the shopping malls out on the highway. People still walk by, strangers, going quietly about their business, which is not to be laughed at. And my hometown, where we are now living a few streets from the house in which I was born, is no longer amusing. When I walk in the old neighborhood, I see houses that I remember from my childhood, but occupants come and go anonymously unless, as sometimes happens, scandal erupts. But it is never funny, nor original.

Eccentricity, I conclude, has become an endangered species. By definition it is never common, being a divergence from the ordinary, a way of acting peculiar to the individual, idiosyncratic, a marching to Thoreau's different drummer. And now, eccentricity is not only rare, it has been turned upside down, so to speak.

To illustrate. I am an airport watcher. To pass the time waiting for flights, I observe what the world-on-the-move is wearing; it gives me a "sense of the country." For American men: open-neck shirts, slacks, often jeans, running shoes. For women: pantsuits (uncharitably covering a multitude of sins without hiding them), heels. Young people, both sexes: jeans, running shoes, jacket (summer, nylon; winter, down), backpacks. Front or back, it is hard to tell one sex from the other. Clearly, the old days of stylish travel outfits and matched luggage are gone. L. L. Bean is the mode and the mood. The right to dress as one pleases, I remind myself—the right to "do one's thing"—was won during the 1960s. (There is a poignant irony in the symbol of those rebellious years—Woodstock. Doing one's thing turned out to mean looking and acting exactly like everyone else, marching to the same Beatle music.)

At that time another skirmish was also being fought, the battle of the hemlines. The fashion industry, giddy with success, decreed maxi-skirts de rigueur, then mini-skirts, back to maxi-, up, down, up, down. The time came when skirts had been shortened to the limit of modesty and fabric, and then hemlines dropped. Faced with buying an entirely new wardrobe, women at last rebelled. We won the battle—the right to wear skirts any length we chose, but, as the saying goes, we may have lost the war—the right to wear skirts at all. Airport watching, I sense skirts are "out."

Nearing the end of a long, overseas flight, I was standing next to a young couple, both in pants, parkas, running shoes, backpacks. We began talking.

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"We realized from the tag on your flight bag you are going to be on the same tour we are," they told me, "but we were afraid to speak to you."

"Why?" I asked in astonishment.

"Well, you looked so—standoffish, all dressed up in your little suit."

Looking around, I discovered I was the only female on the plane in a skirt. How comical! Doing my thing, the perfectly ordinary thing I have been doing all my life, made *me* the eccentric one. I felt the young couple's disapproval, as if, in doing one's thing, some people were more privileged than others, as if in numbers there was not only safety but the norm. Surely a female in a skirt, however outnumbered, is simply old-fashioned. *Eccentric* in its right-side-up sense should be reserved for behavior truly idiosyncratic.

I dearly want to believe that such behavior still exists. Like the snail darter, eccentrics *must* be alive and well, safely hidden in private haunts. My fears for their survival must be exaggerated. Over time, human behavior, if history is to be trusted, remains virtually the same in all its spectrum, *sapiens sapiens*. In fifth century B.C. Athens, Thucydides wrote of the Peloponnesian War for "anyone who wishes to consider the truth of what has happened and what is likely (given the human situation) to happen on future occasions in similar or comparable form," which it has. The human situation is quite unlikely to have changed just in my lifetime. If, when I was, say, seven years old, sitting on the back steps of our house, my favorite observation post, I had fallen asleep like Rip Van Winkle and wakened in the present, I would find many things different—the cars in the garage would be "new and improved"—but people would be behaving in ways my seven years of experience had taught me to expect, occasionally with trepidation. Let me count the ways.

The back steps faced east. I would sit there alone in the early sun, waiting for the "reasonable" hour to come when I could begin wandering in the neighborhood looking for someone to play with. Everyone was up—who could not be?—roused by my brother and his fellow Boy Scouts, each on his upstairs back sleeping porch with his cherished trumpet blowing reveille, or close enough. So, fathers would leave for work and, then, announced by back doors slamming, the children would start coming out. I was patient. The day stretched out before me like an uncharted sea to be explored at leisure, mindful of certain shoals—our next-door neighbor for one.

Mrs. Swenson was Swedish, large and solid, with a husband and two grown sons living at home, along with Buster, an aged, wheezing Boston terrier, all five formed from the same barrel-shaped mold but shorter and squatter in descending order. In long housedress and enveloping apron,

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Mrs. Swenson devoted her considerable life's energy to keeping her property tidy, sweeping inside and out, raking leaves, tending flower beds and vegetable gardens, pruning shrubs and fruit trees, and in winter shoveling snow from walks and driveways. If nothing else offered, she washed windows. Her virtues and faith in God's justice were, like Job's, unfairly tested, my father being the source of her suffering. She complained to the town selectmen of her afflictions: the "goings-on" at our house and the untoward number of people living in it, the children, animals, unraked leaves, and chicken smells blowing across her yard. The selectmen responded with sympathy and admonishing letters to Father, which he threw into the wastebasket unread. Mrs. Swenson, therefore, was left to her own, quite adequate, defenses: broom, shovel, rake, sharp tongue.

I was a little afraid of her, but not enough. Our back steps faced hers. Mornings, we eyed each other warily. Underneath her stiffly corseted exterior beat a tender heart, I now surmise, because from time to time, seeing my wistful expression as I sniffed the delicious smells wafting from her kitchen, she would call me over and give me a handful of warm cookies, with some misgivings, I think. She suspected me, rightly, of being the one who slipped over at dusk to her grape arbor to help myself to as many ripe grapes as I could stuff into my mouth before Buster gave the croupy alarm. I thought her a fussbudget; my father was no odder than anyone else in the neighborhood. The man across the street, during a presidential election campaign, stood out in the middle of the road in his pajamas at 2:00 A.M. and for some time thereafter, shouting, "I'm related to Alf Landon!" Next door to him lived Billy, my brother's closest friend. The neighborhood children succeeded, after many attempts, in climbing the big tree in his front yard, up and over a long branch, onto a deck outside the master bedroom. Finding the door unlocked, we trooped in, dirty, skinned, and bleeding, past Billy's mother, a languid blonde in a flowing negligee, stretched out on a chaise longue smoking a cigarette in a holder a foot long, which she carefully placed in grooves along the head and back of a life-size china swan on the floor beside the chaise before shouting ominously, "Billllleeeee!"

Adults, in my experience, tended to shout. The large tree belt of the Browns' house, next to Billy's on the other side from Alf's relative, was our preferred football field. Occasionally, without warning, Mrs. Brown would rush out from her house, wild-eyed, to shout at my brother and me, "Go home! I won't have my children playing with Catholics!" We were not Catholics, but, the religious affiliations of our transient household being beyond quick explanation and all comprehension, we went home taking our football with us and the whole team, including the two Brown children. We would have liked to play in the empty lot between

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our house and the Millers'; Father had tried many times to buy it from them. The Millers were an elderly, irascible couple. Retrieving stray balls and animals from their property was an act that needed the stoutest heart among us, the fastest runner, the deafest to shouted threats from the pursuer. Unqualified, I was still chosen.

Waking today, I would find myself on the same back steps, facing Mrs. Swenson's kitchen, though she and all her family are long gone to Valhalla, which, I hope, is tidy or is provided with brooms. Her shrubs badly need pruning. The tall oak on our tree belt is gone. The empty lot has a house on it. A quick tour reassures me that the other houses are still there. But to a child's eye and waiting heart, something is very wrong. It is too quiet. No reveille. It's just as well; the selectmen would cite the trumpeters as public nuisances, like barking dogs. No live-in help; no Bridie beating carpets flung over the clothesline. No clotheslines. Fathers leaving for work and mothers, too. No slamming doors. No children coming out; no neighborhood troop playing out the long summer days, free to wander wherever, safely, enjoined only to start home when the streetlights come on. All are off to lessons—dancing, tennis, swimming, gymnastics: by carpool, or on teams, uniformed, bused to schedule across the state. No small entrepreneurs peddling doubtful lemonade, mowing lawns, raking leaves, shoveling snow on sidewalks and long driveways, at fifty cents a job, the money quickly transmuted by delicious alchemy into banana splits at the nearby drugstore. Landscape services are at work or jeeps plowing. No time. Every minute is accounted for and lazy hours foregone. (Father, by his own recalcitrant spelling a "buzy" man, made time to read to my brother and me before bed—*The Count of Monte Cristo*, our favorite, and yards of Dickens.) Most wondrous, no "characters." People on our present street carry on their lives with just such a proportion of the usual virtues and vices as attracts little attention and less interest. Every house has been sold at least once since we moved here, and the change of tenants brings more of the same, and not only in the immediate neighborhood. Up and down the town, like Diogenes with his lantern, I have searched, vainly, for an honest-to-goodness eccentric. Friends, challenged to produce one, fail. They suggest that, if I insist on an explanation for this puzzling situation, I find it myself.

I am inclined to credit Sigmund Freud. Americans seem captivated by psychoanalysis, obsessed with introspection, judging by the entries in *Books in Print* under *Self-*, magazines like *Self*, and such books as *The Psychotherapy Handbook*, edited by Richie Herink (described as " 'The A to Z Guide to More than 250 Different Therapies in Use Today'—beyond psychoanalysis and Gestalt therapy to breathing therapy, computer therapy, feminist therapy, living therapy, reality therapy, and even

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soap opera therapy, where patients approach their own problems through television sagas"). Freudian terminology is part of the language. "Kimberly!" I recently heard a young mother sharply address her three-year-old in the grocery store, "Stop acting out!"

A preoccupation with analysis of self and others *(Games People Play)* may account for the blandness of current political life. Where are the wonderfully eccentric politicians of yesteryear? Gandhi, barefoot, three-quarters naked. Churchill, in a big jumpsuit, waving a big cigar. Khrushchev, banging his shoe on the podium at the United Nations, shouting "We'll bury you!" Truman, writing fierce letters to music critics. Lyndon Johnson, not to be parodied; he *was* a parody. Present-day politicians must mind their idiosyncrasies. Jimmy Carter's fireside chats from the White House in a sweater seemed to his critics less folksy than odd and his consultations on matters of state with Amy truly singular, or so one hopes. Ex-governor Jerry Brown was perceived by some as, in the current jargon, "flaky," and with voters, perception is all. Psychoanalysis of government leaders, dead or alive—Hitler, Stalin, Nixon, Kissinger, Haig—is confidently undertaken by amateurs and professionals alike and makes interesting, if presumptuous, reading. Aspiring politicians counter by hiring public relations firms, the "image-makers," with the result that, like James Bond's girls, they all look alike.

Retrospective analysis of behavior, like revisionist history, I find disenchanting. The chauffeur-driven woman in our town—who had an intense dread of germs, wore white gloves at all times and, when shopping, kicked the front door of the store until a salesman opened it—was, I am now told, suffering severe sexual distress. I prefer to leave her oddities undiagnosed. And Mrs. Swenson's? Sometimes a broom is just a broom, is it not?

In these analytic times, those who see themselves as "different" and find that worrisome must be in therapy. True eccentrics, who are unaware of their difference or have come to terms with it, are living quietly until such time as another Golden Age dawns. Or so it seems to me. It is a tentative, unsatisfactory answer to the question, "Where have all the eccentrics gone?" to be sure. But, in the words of the Great Eccentric himself, Samuel Johnson, "I have found you an argument; I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

Remembering those good old days, I cannot help feeling nostalgic. Like Watson, I enjoy reminiscing about some of the great cases I shared in. Like the Case of the Foolish Pheasant.

During World War II, Father, doing his part for the war effort, bought a small farm, hired a farmer, and started a Victory Garden. On the farm were fruits and vegetables, plus some chickens and a large number of pheasants to be raised and given away at Christmastime to Father's

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favored friends. The pheasants in their large pen fattened. Just before Christmas, Father and the farmer went into the pen to check their charges. The startled pheasants scattered, took to the air and rapidly disappeared into the distance, forever. Both men had forgotten pheasants fly. One foolish pheasant remained behind, strutting around in lone innocence. Father, in a rage, ordered the farmer to chase it down and wring its neck, which he did.

As my fate would have it, I was home for a visit. Father, cooling off, decided to make the best of his disappointment. "*Someone* should have that damn pheasant for Christmas dinner," he told me. He reviewed his wide circle of friends, relatives, neighbors, acquaintances. "Innes?" (my husband's older sister in Memphis, Tennessee). "That's it! You can deliver it to her on your way back to Mississippi." The one pheasant was packed in dry ice in a carton roughly my height, my width, and my weight. On the train, I discovered all the gallant men had gone to war, and the rest claimed bad backs. Alone, I wrestled the carton and my suitcases from one platform to another in New Haven, to another station in New York, and, two days later, into a taxi in Memphis. Innes was effusive in her praise of Father's thoughtfulness. "I can't get over it!" she kept saying. Neither, I was afraid, could I.

At a time when it seems necessary to stress the sameness of people, I think of Father and celebrate the difference. A very little difference, to be sure, when you go to the bottom of it, but very important. And enough.

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Album of a Television Star

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

I

I believed the telephone call at once because my life had been greatly changed several times by other people's actions. It was early in 1963. A woman telephoned and asked if I would like to conduct a series of television programs about film. She was a producer at Channel 13, the New York station of what is now PBS, what was then called Educational Broadcasting. We met, and with the months, the years, she became a sister to me. We met, and within weeks, I began the series.

The station was small, the budget was small, the payment was just visible, so there was little trouble. Edith Zornow, the producer, made me feel that we could do whatever we chose, as if we had our own station, as if the program were a private affair, done for our pleasure, then for broadcast. All that was imposed by executives above was the title, "The Art of Film." I disliked its club-lecture tone, but at least it provided a small irritant. Everything else went well or better.

The series consisted of weekly half-hour programs, shown only in the New York metropolitan area. I talked about films that I chose and illustrated the talk with clips that I chose, or I interviewed someone involved in films. Relatively few actors. The series was on the air for most of the decade, and each program was re-broadcast later in the week when it was first shown. A year or so after the series started, I also began to appear on another of the station's programs as its theater critic. So, for a number of years, my face was often available on television sets around New York.

My joke was that I was famous from coast to coast, East River to Hudson. I needed a joke to cover my mixed feelings. I liked being recognized on the street or when I entered a room, and it also made me wriggle. Recognition gave me pleasure, which I thought mature, and also made me shrink, which I thought childish.

Proportions changed in the everyday. More molecules seemed to batter me in the New York streets. Much of this, I knew, was my fantasy, my masochism about that fantasy, but just when I might begin to think it was all fantasy, a passerby would do a vaudeville double take, or squint intensely, or grin and wave. I began to feel like a walking version of those optical-trick pictures that look like one thing until, after you stare long enough, they look like another—an angel or a devil, a man or a donkey.

Two kinds of people in particular saw both pictures, teenagers and the very elderly. Teenagers, keen on film, would pop their eyes, then walk up and start conversations as if we had known one another for years. As for the aged, whenever I saw a really old person, stooped, with thick glasses, begin to make his or her way toward me on a subway platform, I braced myself for congratulations on defending the finer things in life. I sighed and bore my burden like a new member of a special American society, the celebrities.

The farthest confirmation of my status came in less than a year. In July of 1964 I was in Prague, and some Czech film people took me to dinner. The restaurant was in the old town across the river, the rooftop of a small house with ten or twelve tables. Under the Prague twilight sky, in this secluded place, I felt far from America, even from tourist-trodden Europe. At a corner table a party finished dinner and rose to leave. One of the group was a

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decidedly blonde woman in her forties. As she passed our table, she glanced at me and saw the double picture. She stopped, pointed, and said in a loud New York whine, "I know that face."

II

Edith loved the attention that I was getting, whatever there was of it, and wanted me to get more. She teased both my liking and my loathing of it. She would sometimes greet me with a hearty "How's our star?" If I winced, she would then whisper, "How's our star?"

She was about forty, physically and temperamentally solid, a short, square-built woman with a face full of honesty. She ought to have been in command of the *Titanic*. Nothing agitated her. Whatever the hubbub, she was the still point. Whatever the problem, she either knew the solution or knew where to get it. After some years in the film business, she had been invited into television. One of her first moves had been to propose this series. When the executives approved, she had telephoned me. We had never met, but she had been reading me. That telephone call was for me a large helping of peaceful, affectionate luck.

We had agreed not to scurry for interview guests. Edith wanted most of the programs to be my talks—mostly about foreign films, as it turned out, because American companies wouldn't provide film clips. The interview plan was to invite any interesting guests who happened to be in New York.

We began our interviews at a peak. Rex Harrison was in town, after finishing *Cleopatra* in Rome, and was pausing for a few weeks before proceeding west for *My Fair Lady*. I had idolized him ever since I first saw him in a 1938 film called *Storm in a Teacup*. More, I had been jealous of him, of his casual height, his unpretty good looks, his lean precision. I asked Edith to see whether we could get him as our first guest. Unwittingly I had touched upon a secret. The best interviews are with people of whom you are jealous.

Edith telephoned someone and soon heard that Harrison might be interested but wanted to meet us before deciding. She and I were asked to his hotel suite for tea. He wore a sort of yellow suit. He was quite affable and quite guarded. We left without a decision, but in a day or two we were told that he would do it.

At that time we taped our shows in a studio in the basement of a large institutional building near the UN. Harrison arrived punctually, but he had forgotten his hairpiece. Our makeup man was dispatched to his hotel, and I had to spend about forty minutes in the dressing room with Harrison while the errand was run. I soon saw that it was my job to keep him from blowing up in anger at the delay caused by his own oversight. I reviewed his career with him, as far as I knew it, and dwelled especially on Cusins in *Major Barbara*. It was easy to dwell on it because I loved it. He mellowed. He told me stories about Shaw. The time passed.

The hairpiece arrived and was affixed. "Shall we be *quite* careful?" said Harrison to the makeup man. "If the damned thing's too far forward, I look like Moe in the Three Stooges."

We went into the studio where two facing armchairs flanked a round table. I asked Harrison if he preferred one profile to the other. "Doesn't matter," he said affably. Then, guardedly, he said, "The right." He sat on the right, and we began.

Weeks later, after a few more interviews, Edith told me gently that I had improved. That first time I discovered a cultural phenomenon. The television interviewer is also simultaneously an actor, a screenwriter, and a director. An interview for print is material taken away and shaped at the writer's leisure. A radio interview is shaped to fill time without a moment's silence. A television interview is shaped to fill time with pauses allowed, sometimes even encouraged, because they are not vacant. Besides conducting the conversation from topic to topic, besides shaping the talk in relation to the clock that only he can see, the interviewer must also perform, must be what vaudeville calls a good feed. I began to watch interviewers on the networks and began to understand why most of them were so bad. They didn't understand feeding or screenplay construction or directing.

I soon learned television's strongest power in interviews—presence, sheer presence. If the person's utterances were interesting, so much the better, but the talk merely had to be pleasant. The most important fact was that he or she was there. To see the subject smile or knit brows or fumble for a word or scratch one

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hand with the other was really what these interviews were for. To see the voice coming from the face. Edith and I learned this from transcripts. After some interviews that we thought particularly good, she had them transcribed. On paper the talk was broken, discursive, often banal. What was missing from the transcript of the Carl Dreyer interview was the glisten of his neat silver hair, the sidewise tipping of his head.

III

So I learned to allow for presence. I also learned to allow for absence.

I wanted to do a talk-with-clips program about François Truffaut, whose work was new in those days. He was known here only by three films. Because the lyric quality in Truffaut is so prominent, I thought it would be a good idea to invite a poet to discuss the films at the end of the program. Who better than Robert Lowell?

I had met Lowell a few times. Instead of asking Edith to do it, I telephoned him myself. The moment turned out to be right. He had seen Truffaut, he had seen a few of my programs. I told him my plan and asked if he would join me. He said, "I'm game." He had one condition. He wanted to see the three films again to refresh himself.

The distributor gladly lent us the prints. The station rented a screening room in a grimy Ninth Avenue building, the cheapest such room in New York, and did even that reluctantly. It wasn't only a question of money, which was scarce, it was Lowell. Several months earlier, he had been on a program for Channel 13 and had made many difficulties. He had been late, had refused to be made up, had sulked on camera. I persisted, and Edith staunchly, quietly, backed me up. After a session with a worried executive, we left his office and she waved a hand dismissively at his door. "Do what you like. I'll take care."

I gave Lowell the address of the screening room and the screening times on three successive days. Each day he appeared promptly, wearing the same tweed jacket and striped shirt, and watched the film attentively. *The Four Hundred Blows* and *Shoot the Piano Player* went off without incident. But the sixteen-millimeter print of *Jules and Jim* had not been condensed to conventional size as the first two had been, and the projectionist didn't have the proper lens. I explained this to Lowell and warned him that the film would look as if photographed by El Greco. Soberly he said, "It'll be a new experience," and again watched attentively.

At the time set for the taping, he appeared promptly. Edith and I were upstairs at the front door to greet him, which embarrassed him a bit. Downstairs, remembering the difficulties I had heard of, I said, "Mr. Lowell, I'm going inside now to be made up. If you'd prefer not to . . . "

"Oh, no," he said, "I'd like to do everything."

In the dressing room he hung his jacket on a hook next to mine and sat before the mirror with his hands folded. After the makeup, I took him into the studio and explained the procedure. He would wait in this chair. I would be over there in that armchair, would introduce the program, and would announce that he would appear later. There would be a brief film clip, then I'd speak for a bit. Another brief clip, then I'd speak a bit more. Then a third clip, and while that was running, an assistant would escort him to the armchair facing me and put a throat mike around his neck. After the third clip, he and I would converse for the remaining ten minutes of the half hour. He nodded. During the first clip, I smiled at him, and he smiled back. During the second clip, I smiled at him, and he smiled back. During the third clip, he was led to the other armchair and the mike was adjusted. The clip ended, and I said, "Now for our conversation with Robert Lowell. Mr. Lowell, do you like the films of François Truffaut?"

Thoughtfully he said, "Not much."

My mouth produced some words like "Oh, is that so?" while my brow felt as if a sledgehammer had struck it. Swiftly I remembered that, not in our first telephone talk, or at any of the screenings, had I actually discussed Truffaut with him. All he had agreed to do was to have a second look at the films and tell me what he thought. In his owlish Yankee way, without guile or slyness, he had simply kept his word. He had been game.

I spent ten infinite minutes framing questions that contained the answers I had hoped to have from him. To each of them, he replied with a pensive "No, I don't believe so" or an "I can't quite see those things in those mov-

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ies." At last the clock was merciful, and I thanked him. The tape stopped, and he looked at me with almost boyish pride for having done everything I had asked. So I thanked him again.

We washed up, like mechanics after fixing a car, while he talked of something quite different—his forthcoming plays. Truffaut was far behind him already. Edith and I took him upstairs and walked him to the door. We started to thank him again, and he said, "No. Please. Goodbye." We waved, and he went through the revolving door. Edith and I looked at each other. My eyes rolled upward. She doubled in laughter, which was not easy for a woman of her solidity, but she always doubled up when laughter really struck. At last she said, "It was wonderful. Our best show so far. Only, with God's help, it shouldn't happen again."

It happened again, or something much like it, a couple of years later. But Edith wasn't involved. It was the only program I did during those years for a different station, for a national network.

The guest was Josef von Sternberg. He was coming from California for the publication of his autobiography. His publisher had arranged an interview on a then celebrated Sunday morning television show, and Sternberg had said he would do it only if I were the interviewer. I didn't know why. Perhaps he had seen some of my programs when he was in New York. In any case, he was firm, and the network had to bypass their regular interviewer and invite me. I was flattered, though puzzled, and accepted at once. Thus I acquired a couple of questions that still visit my head on sleepless nights.

I arrived early for the taping, but Sternberg was already there. When we were introduced, he smiled and threw his arms around me and hugged me hard. I was even more puzzled. We had never met. I had never written a word about him. But I thought it would be awkward to ask his reasons, almost like fishing for compliments. We discussed the program, and I told him the questions I had in mind, based on his book. He nodded happily. Fine.

We took our seats, and the taping began. The introductory music, not chosen by me, was one of the most famous of all songs in films, Marlene Dietrich singing "Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt" from *The Blue Angel*. It was a tingling experience to listen to it with the man who had directed the film. I began the program by saying so. Then I noted that his face had changed. Ice had slid in. He looked like a Prussian colonel dealing with a subordinate. "Well?" he barked. "What else?"

Had it been the song? I wondered. Had Dietrich's voice disturbed him? Their affair was one of the pillars of film mythology. I plunged into questions, all outlined in advance and none to do with Dietrich. I thought that, as with Harrison, talking about his work might warm him. But Sternberg didn't change. He was terse, harsh. To almost every question I asked, he answered with a wave of his hand, "It's all in the book." It was, of course, but he had known that beforehand when I told him the questions. It was further comment that I was after. Luckily I had the book in front of me so I could at least read aloud the passage I had asked about. While I read, he swiveled in his swivel chair.

The half hour ended. Then I was puzzled further. As soon as his throat mike was removed, he beamed again. He came over to me with arms outstretched again. He hugged me again. I was too bewildered to ask him what had happened on the air. Anyway it might have sounded critical. Perhaps, I thought, he has an image, the Hollywood martinet, that he wants to maintain. I had his book in my hand. He asked if I would allow him to sign it, and he inscribed it "With great affection." Why he had that affection, what had happened to it for thirty minutes, those questions still corkscrew up in the dark hours.

I was summoning up enough self to ask those questions when someone tugged at me for something. By the time I turned back, Sternberg had gone.

IV

But the most disappointing interview was the one with the man who meant most to me, Michelangelo Antonioni. I had met him in Rome in August of 1964 when he was finishing up *Red Desert*, and the next month I saw him at the Venice Festival where his film won the prize. I told him about my television series and invited him to appear on it when he next came to New York. He promised.

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He arrived for the opening of *Blow-Up* in December of 1966 and quickly arranged to keep his promise. It was to be a special event. Edith had maneuvered a grant. The program was to be an hour and a half, we could afford to edit the tape, and the program would be distributed to PBS stations around the country.

To protect ourselves, Edith engaged a Berlitz translator. Antonioni understood considerable English but did not yet trust himself to speak it much. A few weeks earlier, in the regular series, I had interviewed Pier Paolo Pasolini who had no English at all. He had brought a translator selected by his American distributor, a cheery young woman who could barely be understood. To avoid this disaster and to make the most of our big chance, Edith engaged a professional.

As it turned out, he spent the whole time in the control room, listening and, I heard later, groaning and grabbing his head. Antonioni had lunched with a friend of his, an Italian writer who lived in New York. He had brought the friend along and wanted him to translate. The friend was fluent in English. Anyway, we had no choice.

As soon as the taping began, it was clear that the friend couldn't understand why we were concentrating on a filmmaker when a writer of his ability was on hand. The writer's scarf got toyed with a lot while Antonioni was speaking. I began to get impatient and to press. My questions were too long. Antonioni's answers, as translated, were too short. When it was over, Antonioni was exhausted. So, differently, was I. But after Edith and I edited the tape, particularly to insert clips from Antonioni's films as they were mentioned, the final form was improved somewhat.

Still, because of one result, I think gratefully of that program. A few months later I was on the subway late one night, on an express train with long runs between stops. At one station the only other person in the car with me got off, and four or five hulking teenagers in sloppy dress got on. They sat at the far end of the car on the opposite side. As the train started, they looked at me. They began to whisper among themselves. I began to chill. The biggest and most loutish of the bunch got to his feet and started down the car toward me. I knew it would be three minutes or so before the next station. The blood drained out of my arms and legs. I didn't know what to do except watch my fate shuffle toward me.

He stopped in front of me, huge and dirty. He hitched up his trousers with his elbows and said, "Hey. You Stanley Kauffmann?"

He and his friends had liked the Antonioni program.

Afterward, a day or two afterward, after I had stopped shivering and had stopped laughing, I began to feel sentenced. The double picture seemed fixed. I felt elevated but confined, like being high on a small platform.

I would likely never have done anything about it myself. I would have continued in television, as in so many situations that were tolerable enough but which I more or less hoped would change. This situation was changed for me. Edith left the station. She was offered a good job with a distributor of sixteen-millimeter prints of good films. She told me about it beforehand. She said that one reason she was leaving was because new executives at the station thought our program might have run its course. "What do they know?" she said. "The trouble is, they don't know they don't know. Enough already."

I kept appearing for a while after she left. But the station changed, was growing, was getting more funds, was becoming more cautious. Our television, Edith's and mine, was moving up into small-time big time. The film program stopped. I continued to broadcast theater criticism on a weekly show, then that stopped. Then the station called me back to conduct a weekly hour-and-a-half program on the arts. I got much more money than on the film program but had much less fun out of it. The grant for that series was not renewed. Another program was suggested for me, but I had trouble with one of the executives. Anyway, television, for me, meant working with Edith. Our private party was over, swamped by new petty grandeurs.

The broadcasting itself had become strange, too. When I had started, I had put a typescript on the table before me and had read off it, easily, without keeping my head bowed. Now, after seven years, I needed glasses. I didn't want contact lenses, the station didn't want glasses. Now I had to use a TelePrompTer, and a TelePrompTer is deadly to anyone for whom sentences and paragraphs have shapes. Those shapes are essential to rhythm and phrasing. A TelePrompTer serves up

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lines of words strung like sausages. I hated it.

It was over, our television, Edith's and mine. I fancied that we had been like a film studio in the earliest one-reel days, without much money but free and freewheeling. Our sense of liberty had been heightened because all around us were the networks, towering and nervous. Edith and I had been part of a historical moment, when one small corner of a huge medium could belong to two people. Done. Done, the metropolitan-area celebrity. Done, the double self. Almost no one in New York knows my face anymore. I sometimes am glad the recognition is gone, which I still think is childish, yet sometimes I miss it, which I now think is childish, too.

The Business of the Dancer

(for Balanchine)

EDWARD CASE

The business of the dancer
Measures life and death.
His body is a standard
Borne on his leaping breath.
Earth must not deceive him
Or he will trip and fall,
Nor must heaven grieve him
Who cannot grasp it all.
Between flux and order
He mediates a border.
Thus the dancing priest
Sanctifies the feast.

✪ EDWARD CASE's work has appeared in various journals, including the *New Criterion*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Modern Age*. This poem was taken from a collection of recent work that he was preparing for publication at the time of his death last summer.

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Dr. A. P. Chekhov

DORIS VIDAVER and MAYNARD M. COHEN

At the time of his death in 1904, Anton Chekhov had contributed a series of plays that revolutionized the contemporary theater, stories and short novels destined to become literary classics, a collection of notebooks, and well over four thousand letters that were certain to encourage varying interpretations of his life and personality. Despite divergent details, these sources consistently evoke the image of a man of compassion and encompassing concern for others, a man whose philosophical principles were embodied in his life through his activities as both a writer and a physician. Examination of the relationship between Chekhov's two careers reveals a devotion to medicine that endured despite mounting literary fame and declining health. Chekhov's art as a physician had many of the virtues that distinguish his writing, offering a model for anyone concerned with the place of the humane in the practice of medicine.

Medicine was Chekhov's first career. His medical training at the University of Moscow led him to value in literary work the same qualities that he valued in medical practice: honesty, objectivity, and, above all, humaneness. Although he frequently employed physicians as characters and wrote of disease in his literary work, he did so only when essential to the story he was telling and always with scientific accuracy. To his literary protégé, Yelena Shavrova, he explained: "I write about sickness only when it forms part of the characters or adds color to them. I am afraid of frightening people with diseases."

Chekhov's respect for scientific accuracy strengthened his uncompromising attitude toward objectivity in literature. Evidence for this comes from Chekhov's correspondence with Grigory Rossolimo, the distinguished neurologist, who wrote to Chekhov soliciting biographic material to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of their medical school graduation. In reply, Chekhov stated his literary credo: "I have tried, whenever possible, to take scientific data into account, and where it has not been possible, I have preferred not writing at all."

The inclusion of doctors in the Chekhov plays is well known and analysis of their medical aspects is perhaps redundant, but what can be pointed out here is that physicians—both in his drama and his fiction—served a dramatic purpose for which characters of no other profession could be substituted; here, of course, Chekhov drew on his own practical experience as a doctor. For example, in the familiar long story "Ward No. 6," the evolution of Andrei Ragin from ward physician to ward patient is not only enriched by Chekhov's deep understanding of human motives and psychology, but also by his awareness of the most mundane details of hospital life: the compulsion to ascend the professional ladder, no matter at whose expense; the consequence of stepping beyond boundaries of objectivity toward the patient; the relentless following of hospital routine to a point of exhaustion, which is peculiar to the medical profession. In "Enemies," Chekhov went even further, portraying in fiction the same vulnerability of the doctor that he had

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described in a letter to his publisher Alexey Suvorin:

> Physicians go through loathsome days and hours. True enough, ignoramuses and cads are no rarity among physicians, even as among writers, engineers, and people in general, but it is only physicians who go through those loathsome hours and days which I am speaking of, and for that, in all conscience, much must be forgiven them.

Chekhov noted in a letter from the late 1890s that he no longer recalled his primary motivation for entering the field of medicine, yet he often mentioned that his literary efforts were for the sole purpose of making money. Three years before Chekhov began medical school, his father, penniless, had left the family's native town of Taganrog, soon to be followed by his wife, daughter, and four of his five sons. Only the sixteen-year-old Anton remained in Taganrog, where he supported himself by tutoring.

Despite an undistinguished academic record, the young Chekhov received a scholarship to attend the University of Moscow Medical School. On arrival in Moscow in 1879, Chekhov found his family disorganized and in financial distress. He quickly took over its management with such authority that his siblings called him "Father Antosha." In addition to contributing his scholarship stipend to the family, he obtained student boarders, and, most important, rounded out the collective income with earnings from his writing.

In March 1880, Chekhov's first story, "Letter from a Don Landowner by His Scholarly Neighbor," appeared in a magazine called *Grasshopper*. Spurred on by this success, Chekhov gave even more time to writing. He wrote with enormous facility; in one year alone he published 129 stories, articles, and news reports using a variety of pen names: "Physician Without Patients," "My Brother's Brother," "Antosha Chekhonte," and "Man Without Spleen." Early in his career Chekhov had begun writing "vaudevilles," farces that were extremely lucrative. "A farce," he explained, "is worth 600 *sazhens* of land. Vaudevilles gush out of me like oil from a Baku well." His references to writing and its monetary worth were understandable. Chekhov had no literary career in mind at that time and was not proud of the quality of such writing.

Chekhov's medical study time was limited by the writing he did in order to support himself and his family. Nevertheless he did well each year. He was attracted by academic medicine and considered writing a doctoral dissertation, first on a history of sexuality, then on a history of medicine in Russia, but he completed neither.

In 1883, while still a medical student, Chekhov spent a summer vacation in Voskresensk, assisting Dr. A. P. Arkhangelsky in the small hospital in the nearby town of Chikino. His preceptor observed that "Chekhov labored with concentrated attention, and obvious love for his work, and for the sick who passed through his hands. However long-winded and irrelevant they might be in telling of their illness[,] he listened patiently and never raised his voice."

During the evenings, Chekhov and other young physicians would gather at Dr. Arkhangelsky's home. Even as a student he was interesting to the laity: "Everyone thinks it necessary to have a chat with me about medicine. And when they are bored talking about medicine, they take up the subject of literature."

Chekhov announced the completion of his medical studies to his publisher and friend, Nicholas Leikin, in a letter of June 25, 1884, signed "Doctor and District Physician A. Chekhov." He joined the Chikino Hospital that summer, this time as a practicing physician. His first earnings from his practice were recorded: five rubles for the unsuccessful treatment of a young lady with a toothache, one ruble for successful therapy of a monk with dysentery, and three rubles from a vacationing Moscow actress. He also assisted in an autopsy of a murder victim, and later referred to a similar event fictionally in his stories "A Dead Body" and "Perpetuum Mobile." Describing his initial reaction to the practice of medicine, Chekhov wrote in a letter dated August 23, 1884, "The success of my new career threw me into such rapture that I gathered all those rubles together and at an inn bought vodka and beer for my table."

In July of 1884, Chekhov substituted for the vacationing head of another rural hospital and for two weeks worked with the help of only a feldsher (a type of medical assistant). At his first minor operation, however, he was so unnerved by the screaming of his young patient, and by the sobbing of the mother, that

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he sent for help from Chikino, and Dr. P. G. Rozanov completed the procedure.

When his summer in Voskresensk ended, Chekhov returned to Moscow and placed on his door a brass plate engraved *Dr. A. P. Chekhov*. His practice was not a financial success. He treated his literary and artistic friends, charging them nothing, and on house calls he often spent most of the small fees he received for taxi fare. In addition, he agreed to supply free medical care to all those working for Gavrilov, his father's employer. A failure to achieve good results with treatment inevitably produced great distress in him. He lamented becoming a doctor rather than a lawyer after losing to typhus the mother and a sister of his artist friend Alexander Yanov.

In the following year, 1885, Chekhov again summered in the country and once more substituted for Dr. Arkhangelsky at Chikino. The peasants from the area soon learned that Chekhov was a physician, and their response led him to write to Leikin (September 15): "The sick swarm here and plague me. . . . Several hundred have come and I've earned the total of one ruble."

After Chekhov's return to Moscow, medicine continued to take much of his time, yet its rewards were never financial. Money was a continual preoccupation with him. His literary income mounted with his writing successes, however, and he was repeatedly pressed to abandon medical practice. He resisted all such pressure, speaking again and again of his intent to continue in his chosen profession. "My family name and crest I've given to medicine, which I shall not desert the rest of my life. Sooner or later I shall part with literature."

The double occupation did begin to take its toll. In a letter dated March 28, 1886, to the writer Dmitri Grigorovich, who had been urging Chekhov to concentrate on his writing, he said, "I am a physician and am up to my ears in medical work, so the saw about chasing two hares has robbed no one of more sleep than me." As late as September 1888, when Chekhov had passed from writing purely for profit to more serious literary efforts, he still expressed a dual allegiance. He wrote to Alexey Suvorin, his principal publisher, the oft-quoted statement: "I feel more alert and satisfied with myself when I think I have two occupations instead of one. Medicine is my lawful wedded wife, and literature my mistress. When one gets on my nerves I spend the night with the other. This may be somewhat disorganized, and anyway, neither one loses anything by my duplicity. If I didn't have medicine, I'd never devote my spare time and thoughts to literature. I lack discipline."

Literature was not the only impediment to Chekhov's orderly medical practice. Always restless, he allayed some of that restlessness by travel, going within Russia to St. Petersburg, the Crimea, the Ukraine, and summer dachas. He also made five trips to Western Europe. He was particularly fascinated with eastern Siberia, an interest that had persisted since reading Goncharov's *Frigate Pallas* during his school days. His curiosity was stirred by stories of the penal colony, such as Vladimir Korolenko's "Escapees from Sakhalin," which were then popular in Moscow's intellectual circles. When Chekhov chanced to see notes that his brother Mikhail was studying for a forthcoming examination on forced labor in the Russian penal code, the young doctor spoke of visiting Sakhalin himself.

Despite the opposition of his amazed friends, Chekhov never wavered in his determination to visit the penal colony on that desolate island off the Siberian coast. Chekhov scholars have searched for his motivation in taking the journey, a search impeded by Chekhov's tendency for humorous allusion to his reasons. In a letter to Suvorin, dated March 9, 1890, just before his departure for the island, Chekhov clarified his thoughts: "I want to write at least one or two hundred pages to pay off my debt to medicine, toward which as you know, I've behaved like a pig." The scientific intent of his journey was supported by intensive pre-voyage research of penology and of the island's history, native population, wildlife, and resources.

Following this extensive preparation, Chekhov left Moscow on April 21, 1890, and reached his destination almost three months later. He crossed Russia by train and Volga steamer, then traveled through Siberia almost entirely by carriage. After the final leg on the steamer *Baikal*, he came ashore at Sakhalin's capital, Aleksandrovsky Post, on July 11. For the following three months he was continually occupied in collecting data in the best scientific tradition. Chekhov and his assistants, locally acquired, painstakingly recorded

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information on questionnaires he had arranged to have printed by the Sakhalin administration. As the study neared completion, he wrote Suvorin:

> I don't know what I'll end up with, but I've a good deal accomplished. I have enough for three dissertations. I got up at five in the morning, went to bed late, and spent all my days worrying about how much I had yet to do. . . . I've had the patience to take a census of the entire population of Sakhalin. I went around to each of the settlements, stopped at each hut and talked with each person. I used a filing card system . . . and have records of about ten thousand convicts and settlers by now. . . . There's not a single convict or settler on Sakhalin that hasn't talked with me. I was particularly successful in the children's census and I place great hopes in it.

Chekhov witnessed every form of activity on the island—administrative, agricultural, medical, recreational, and penal—and every form of punishment to which the prisoners were subjected, missing only an execution. In the town of Due, at one of the island's most formidable prisons, he accompanied the warden and the prison physician to observe a penal flogging. He left before half of the ninety lashes had been administered, going out into the street; it seemed to him that "the heartrending sound from the guardhouse could be heard all over Due." Later, he wrote Suvorin that he dreamed of the hangman and the repulsive flogging bench for three or four nights thereafter.

On returning to Moscow, Chekhov was again faced with financial problems—difficulties accentuated by his loss of income for the more than six months he had devoted to his Sakhalin expedition. Although he temporarily put aside his writing on the penal colony, he maintained a connection to Sakhalin by immediately collecting textbooks and arranging for the shipment of 2,200 such volumes for the children of the island.

In the city the hours devoted to his medical practice yielded little recompense. Frequent visitors impinged upon his writing time. As a solution to both his time and his money problems, he looked toward a home in the country where he felt his medical duties would give greater personal satisfactions and where he and his family would be able to live on his literary income alone. With help from Suvorin and other friends, Chekhov negotiated a mortgage to purchase the estate Melikhovo, his home for the next ten years.

In March of 1892 Chekhov, loaded down with medical supplies, arrived at the estate, which was roughly fifty miles from Moscow. The news spread quickly, and he was soon besieged by patients—peasants not only from nearby, but also those arriving by primitive vehicles from as far as fifteen miles away. Dr. Chekhov held daily clinics at Melikhovo, dispensed free medication, and made house calls whenever asked, even in foul weather and in the middle of the night.

Almost a year after first setting out toward the foreboding arctic island of Sakhalin, Chekhov finally found time to prepare his scientific treatise on the penal colony. He set himself a rigid writing schedule: Monday through Wednesday were to be devoted to writing on Sakhalin, Thursday through Saturday to his short novel *The Duel,* and Sunday to writing brief stories.

When the treatise was completed, Chekhov had described the island's geography, its population and social life, living conditions in and outside the prisons, family status of both convicts and free men, trials and punishment in the penal colony, attempts at escape, and finally the medical status of the island's inhabitants. Political prisoners were few, as most of these were confined to the Siberian mainland. The majority of prisoners in Sakhalin had been sentenced there for criminal acts. Once a prison sentence ended, the convicts became "settlers," a designation that often made no significant improvement in their lot. They were nonetheless "free" men or women, and after ten years achieved the "peasant" status that allowed them to leave the island for Siberia. They could not, however, hope to return to European Russia. Free wives or husbands of convicts followed some of their spouses to the penal colony and there, with their families, shared the miserable existence. Aside from soldiers, guards, and administrative personnel, the only other inhabitants of the island were the indigenous Gilyak and Ainu tribes.

Chekhov's book on Sakhalin had importance in an additional sense. The comment "enough for three dissertations" in the letter to Suvorin was more than an idle reference. Since his student days, Chekhov had been attracted to academic medicine, stating, "If I

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were a teacher I would try to draw my audience as deeply as possible into the area of subjective feelings of patients, for I think that this would really prove useful to the students."

Chekhov recognized that a doctoral thesis was essential when he communicated his desire for an academic post at the University of Moscow to the neurology professor Grigory Rossolimo. On his friend's behalf, Rossolimo proposed to the dean of the faculty of medicine that *The Island: A Journey to Sakhalin* be accepted as a doctoral dissertation and that Chekhov be offered a position on the faculty. Rossolimo recalled in his memoirs that the dean walked out of the office without even bothering to reply.

All along Chekhov had feared that his work on Sakhalin would have difficulty in passing the censors. His concerns were well founded. The book was published first in serial form in 1893, and the last four chapters dealing with the free and military population, morality, punishment, escape, and medical conditions were banned. When the work appeared in book form two years later, in 1895, the previously censored chapters were included.

Unquestionably, Chekhov's work succeeded in bringing to public attention the harshness of the system of punishment and exile. Soon afterward, those with "peasant" status did have some opportunity to leave Siberia and return to their native abodes in Russia. Chekhov made very little literary use of the penal colony material. He had written up some of his trans-Siberian travel experiences as notes for Russian newspapers; but only a few stories—"Gusev," "In Exile," and "Murder"—incorporate events from his island sojourn.

About this time, Chekhov accepted broader medical responsibilities, and his writing was preempted once again. When cholera menaced Russia in the early 1890s, Chekhov was asked to serve on the Serpukhov Sanitary Council and to organize measures against the spread of the epidemic. He arranged for the building of immunization and reception wards in the twenty-five villages, four factories, and monastery in his district. Since no funds were available for these projects, he took it upon himself to collect the necessary money.

For three months, Dr. Chekhov was continually occupied with the care of his patients, with lecturing on the dangers of the epidemic, and with collecting data for the Sanitary Council meetings. The Serpukhov District was spared from cholera in 1892, but the disease threatened once more in 1893, and all of Chekhov's summer was spent on medicine and public health matters. His "wife" became demanding, and his "mistress" was unhappily abandoned. On August 2, 1893, he wrote to Suvorin: "It is terrible and dull and repulsive. . . . A girl with worms in her ear, diarrhea, vomiting, syphilis—Phui!!! Sweet sounds of poesy, where are you??"

Throughout his professional medical life, Chekhov maintained keen interest in scientific advances and kept up with the current medical literature. He considered scientific publications of such import that, in 1895, he devoted considerable energy to the rescue of the financially distressed *Chronicles of Surgery*. Despite increasing numbers of subscribers, the journal sustained an annual deficit usually made good by its eminent surgeon-editor Nicolai Sklifosovsky. When Dr. Sklifosovsky was transferred to St. Petersburg, he suffered a loss of income and was no longer able to underwrite the annual 1,500-ruble deficit. Chekhov's own funds had also been depleted by yet another charitable undertaking, and he was unable to assume the burden himself, as he would have liked. He did, however, find another publisher for the endangered journal and obtained a promise of a 1,500-ruble loan from Suvorin.

Chekhov expressed his social concerns in other than medical areas as well. For example, he became seriously involved in many community affairs near Melikhovo. He assumed responsibility for the national census in his district, and he himself made rounds of the peasant huts. He was chosen to be a member of the Serpukhov Zemstvo (county council), served on the executive committee of local charitable groups, and participated in the inspection of the local insane asylum.

His greatest efforts, however, were on behalf of education. A hundred rubles of his own funds went first to purchase desks and equipment for the local school. He then contributed 1,500 rubles (the gift that prevented his underwriting *Chronicles of Surgery*) and did everything necessary to complete the building of three schools. He described himself at

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this point as architect, contractor, and fundraiser.

Chekhov's philanthropy extended beyond the Melikhovo environs, benefiting principally his native Taganrog. He donated more than 2,000 of his own books to the municipal library there, and later, when in Nice, he sent it 310 volumes of French classics. He arranged to secure reference material from publishers, business firms, and governmental agencies, so that Taganrog housed one of the finest of Russia's provincial libraries. He also became a trustee of the parochial and rural schools of the Taganrog area.

When famine struck Russia in 1891—a catastrophe that was worsened by government misunderstanding and obstruction—Chekhov immediately became involved. He contributed a chapter of his book on Sakhalin to a benefit volume to be published in the *Moscow Gazette*, and he participated in a scheme to alleviate another problem: shortage of grain was forcing the peasants to slaughter their livestock, leaving the population increasingly vulnerable to famine in the following year. Foreseeing the disaster, Chekhov raised money to buy farm animals, feed them for the winter, and then return them to their owners the next summer. He wrote soliciting letters to many philanthropists on behalf of the plan. These efforts achieved only modest results, however, and were overshadowed by the more successful activities of Leo Tolstoy.

Although social and political unrest was extensive in the Russia of his time, Chekhov kept himself apart from the radical movement that occupied so many of the intellectuals. He did, however, act to aid victims of intolerance. Religious bigotry was pervasive in the country, with Jews as the chief target, although Moslem, Tatar, and other minorities suffered as well. Only a very few privileged members of the Jewish group were allowed to live in Moscow, and even fewer were admitted to the University. Chekhov devoted considerable effort to obtaining admission for Jewish students to high schools and to the University of Moscow. Outside Moscow, Jews were repressed, and the spectre of pogroms loomed in many of the towns and villages.

As a youth, Chekhov was reported to have come to the aid of a fellow student named Wolkenstein, expelled from the Taganrog school for slapping a classmate who had baited him. According to this account, Chekhov rallied his class to threaten mass resignation if Wolkenstein was not reinstated. Whether or not that successful action was a reality, we know that Chekhov later acted vigorously against bigotry.

Chekhov was in Paris at the peak of the Dreyfus affair. As is well known, the Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus of the French Army had been imprisoned on Devil's Island for espionage that had been proven to have been committed by Major Esterhazy. When Émile Zola and many other French intellectuals rose to Dreyfus's defense, Chekhov studied the case carefully, then energetically joined their cause. His friend Suvorin, an arch conservative, maintained his anti-Dreyfus stance despite Chekhov's arguments, and the relationship between the two was strained from this point on.

On several occasions Chekhov interceded on behalf of Jewish friends or acquaintances. In July 1903, the Yiddish writer, Sholom Aleichem (Solomon Rabinowitz) solicited a story from Chekhov for a volume being published in Warsaw as a benefit for the victims of recent pogroms at Kishinyov. Chekhov promised that story, if health permitted, but in the meantime placed all of the stories he had already written at Sholom Aleichem's disposal: "I will be nothing if not deeply gratified to see them translated into Yiddish and printed in a miscellany for the benefit of the Jewish victims in Kishinyov." Subsequently he offered to help place a Russian translation of a Sholom Aleichem story in any journal of the author's choice.

While it was dangerous to aid Jewish causes, it was even more precarious to support a radical in czarist Russia, as Chekhov did in the case of Maxim Gorky. Chekhov was delighted when his friend Gorky was elected a fellow member of the Russian Academy, a membership that carried many privileges. Gorky's election had been consummated, however, without approval of the czar, who promptly rescinded the action. In protest, Chekhov resigned; on August 25, 1902, he wrote to Alexander Veselovsky, the chairman of the Academy's Department of Russian Language and Literature "that the annulment had originated with the Academy of Sciences, and since I am an Honorary Academician this announcement originated with me, too. I can-

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not reconcile my conscience to it. . . . I was able to arrive at only one decision, extremely painful and grievous to me, namely, most respectfully to request you to solicit the annulment of my rank of Honorary Academician."

Chekhov continued to "course his two hares" throughout his Melikhovo period and, in fact, defied the proverb by catching both. It was illness, and not the demands of literature, that eventually led him to leave his medical practice. He first spat blood just after finishing medical training at the University. He attributed the blood-stained sputum to a burst vessel in his throat, and he persisted in that delusion, at least publicly, for thirteen years despite intermittent hemoptysis.

In March 1897, Chekhov suffered a frank pulmonary hemorrhage while dining with Suvorin, and the denial could no longer be sustained. Dr. A. A. Ostruomov, a Moscow pulmonary specialist, diagnosed apical tuberculosis and recommended that his patient spend the winter away from the rigors of Moscow and Melikhovo. Chekhov did so, leaving for France, but he returned from Nice in the spring and resumed seeing patients at the estate. His disease was relentless, and he ultimately heeded medical advice to forsake the cold climate. He left Melikhovo and his practice in 1898 to settle in Yalta, in what was to be his final home.

Although "formal" practice of medicine, travel, and energy-consuming charitable activities were prohibited by his doctor, Chekhov still maintained contact with patients, continued his philanthropic efforts, and returned several times to Moscow. On one trip in 1901, he married the actress Olga Knipper.

Once in Yalta, Chekhov was besieged with requests to aid the many tuberculars who had similarly sought the benefits of a milder climate. Even Moscow doctors sent him patients. He formed a charitable society to arrange pensions for consumptive patients of small means and, later, to construct a sanitarium. To the latter he contributed five thousand rubles of his own. He joined the local chapter of the Red Cross, began a newspaper campaign to raise funds for the starving children of Samara, and arranged amateur performances of "Gudunov" that brought a thousand rubles to that effort.

Despite his weakened state, Chekhov managed to complete *The Cherry Orchard*, and he returned to Moscow on December 4, 1903. A good part of his next six weeks were spent at the Moscow Art Theatre preparing for the opening of his last play. Weakened by disease and mindful of the debacle of the initial performance of *The Seagull*, Chekhov decided to remain at home during the premiere, on January 17, 1904, the evening of his forty-fourth birthday.

He knew that death was imminent despite his denials to friends and family. To his former student A. S. Yakovlev, he had remarked: "My friend you forget I'm a doctor, however bad a one I may be. The medical experts do not at all deceive me; my case is a poor one, and the end is not far off."

Chekhov's friends, producers, and associates were indeed cognizant of the seriousness of his condition. They had prepared a celebration that included honoring—a year premature—the twenty-fifth anniversary of his first publications. Chekhov was persuaded to go to the theater and appeared on stage to a tumultuous tribute. Vladimir Nemirovich Dankchenko, co-founder of the theater, concluded the eulogy, which lasted more than an hour, with these words: "Our salutations may have wearied you, but you ought to take comfort in this: that you observe here only a part of the limitless devotion which Russian educated society has for you. To such an extent [we are] indebted to your talent, to your tender heart, to your pure soul."

Overwhelmed by the warmth and scale of the celebration, Chekhov left the stage without a word of reply, unable to regain his composure. He completed no more works. On July 2, 1904, less than six months later, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was dead. Those final tributes at the Moscow Arts Theatre had been brought about not only by the power of his literary work, his devotion to his patients, his acts of social consciousness, but, ultimately, by Chekhov's unswerving insistence on honesty in literature, in medicine, and in life.

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A Case of Religious Counter-Culture

The German Waldensians

ROBERT E. LERNER

The Waldensians of late-medieval Germany are the Middle Ages' forgotten heretics. Those who remember a few scraps from a college medieval history course may recollect having heard something about "Albigensians and Waldensians," but if pressed to say anything specific about either group they would be more likely to recall that the Albigensians were dualists of Languedoc who fell victim to the ruthless "Albigensian Crusade" than to remember anything about the Waldensians at all. Nor would many professional medievalists be able to go much further. Some might have something ready to say about "Peter Waldo," a twelfth-century citizen of Lyons who founded a brotherhood of itinerant lay preachers, and perhaps also something about certain awkward similarities between the early Waldensians and the early Franciscans (the former proscribed by the papacy, the latter supported by the papacy a mere generation later); but if asked what happened to the Waldensians after the death of Waldo, they would probably reply, incorrectly, that the movement remained limited to France and Italy and was rooted out in both places by the thirteenth-century Inquisition.

Assuming that a professional asked for time to consult a bookshelf, I suspect he would resort to the best single-volume treatment of medieval heresy—Malcolm Lambert's expert synthesis of 1977—but there he would find only the briefest consideration of the post-Waldo Waldensian movement: 12 pages out of a total of 370. This account at least would inform him that Waldensianism survived until the sixteenth century in northern Italy and southern France and that Waldensian colonies were also established in Germany. But Lambert's survey would still leave the false impression that "Waldensians survived narrowly," huddling for survival primarily in Alpine regions "in their remote valleys." In fact, Waldensians in Germany survived broadly from 1200 to the end of the Middle Ages in the scores of thousands—and hardly ever in mountain redoubts, but in Germany's biggest cities, as well as in farming villages on the flattest agricultural plains.

Three reasons may be posited to explain why German Waldensians remain so poorly known. One is that Waldensian doctrines, wherever they were taught, were not sensational. There is no hint in Waldensian thought of Zoroastrian-like struggles between flesh and spirit, no hint of Zen-like mysticism, no hint of piquant sexual precepts, and no hint of revolutionary millennialism. Since Waldensian teachings do not make gripping copy, the heresy has lacked its Oldenbourgs, Laduries, Tuchmans, and Ecos. Second, with the outstanding exceptions of the Ninety-five Theses and the Third Reich, little German history of any sort is well known in the English-speaking world because fluent reading knowledge of German is rare even within the academic guild. Finally, until the last few years there was little reason for anyone other than a very advanced specialist to concern himself with medieval German Waldensian history, because the subject appeared to be wrapped up. Seemingly exhaustive surveys of Waldensian fortunes east of the Rhine had been published in the two decades on either side of 1900, and nothing more seemed worth saying.

Recently this situation has changed as a

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result of some startling documentary finds. To take only the most dramatic: in 1979, while the television cameras were whirring at Montaillou, a Munich research historian announced, in a book for specialists with the unpromising title of *Sources for the Bohemian Inquisition of the Fourteenth Century*, a manuscript discovery that by all rights should have been covered on the first page of the *New York Times*. Since the *Times* has remained silent, I would like to report the story that its readers missed and then proceed to the larger matter of why the late-medieval German Waldensians deserve to be better known.

The Munich research historian to whom I refer, Alexander Patschovsky, is the kind of scholarly virtuoso who, as Lord Acton said of the nineteenth-century German historian J. F. Böhmer, "raises drudgery to the rank of a fine art." It is particularly appropriate to apply Acton's tag to Patschovsky, not just because he truly turns scholarly sludge into gold, but because he is Böhmer's lineal scholarly descendant; together with G. H. Pertz, Böhmer established the Society for the Study of Germany's Older History in the 1820s, and Patschovsky is among the best of those now carrying on the work of the organization. Today Böhmer's society is a research institute funded by the German Federal Republic and customarily known by the name of its century-and-a-half-long string of publications, the "*Monumenta Germaniae historica*" (Germany's Historical Monuments). One writes or goes "to the Monumenta" (i.e., the society's Munich offices), or someone may be a "Monumentist" (i.e., an employee preparing an edition of a medieval source deemed to be one of "Germany's Monuments"). Patschovsky has been a Monumentist since 1966 and, during that time, has become one of the most accomplished discoverers and editors of medieval texts.

Since 1966 Patschovsky's official assignment has been to edit a thirteenth-century treatise on heresy and inquisitorial procedure called "the Anonymous of Passau," after the name of its unknown author. Yet even though he published a full-length study in 1968 dedicated to solving many problems regarding the composition and early circulation of the "Passauer Anonymous," he still has not brought out his edition. Nor may he be doing so soon, for he is not one to lurch incautiously into print.

At present there are two schools of thought concerning the editing of medieval sources. One maintains that, since so many important sources for the study of medieval history and thought have either never been published or are available only in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions, current scholarship ought to see to the publishing of as many of these as possible as soon as possible. Although proceeding with speed means taking editorial shortcuts, the first school is all in favor of doing so. Otherwise, it would normally take several years for a scholar to track down all the surviving manuscript copies of any given work, years more to reconstruct the most seemingly authentic text of that work by means of winnowing out variants and positing lines of scribal descent, and years more still to track down all of the work's explicit or implicit quotations. In lieu of that enormous expense of time, and—not least—to guard against the danger of ending up by publishing nothing at all, the first school argues for bringing out "working editions" based on no more than one or two well-chosen manuscripts and adorned with no more than modest referential apparatuses. Against this, members of the opposing school contend that if you're going to do something at all you ought to do it right. Patschovsky belongs to this second school.

In practice this has meant that since 1966 Patschovsky has been preparing the edition of the *Anonymous of Passau* by poring through catalogues of manuscript collections—published or unpublished—looking for hitherto unnoticed copies of his treatise, and by minutely studying all other medieval inquisitorial sources—published or unpublished—that might in any way relate to his own. Whether this stately progress toward the definitive edition of the *Passauer Anonymous* will ultimately bring laurels for the "let's do it right" school or vindicate the "let's hurry up" argument (insofar as he never finishes) remains to be seen. In either event, Patschovsky has more than earned his pay in the meantime; for, serendipitous discoveries he has made on the way to his definitive edition have led him to bring out some of the most important publications achieved by any medievalist in the twentieth century.

Considering the location of his Inquisitor's

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home base in Passau (today the easternmost city of any size in West Germany), Patschovsky regarded it as most sensible to concentrate his research on and in points east. Today both Germanies are distinct culturally as well as juridically from Austria, and sharp ethnic divisions separate both Germanies and Austria from Czechoslovakia and Poland. But, in the later Middle Ages, no nationalisms divided Germans from Austrians, many parts of contemporary Czechoslovakia and Poland were settled densely by German speakers, and large pockets of German colonization extended still farther eastward to Hungary, Rumania, and the present-day Soviet Union. Hence the German Inquisitor known as the Anonymous of Passau was as likely to have had close contacts with other German Inquisitors east of today's Germanies as he was to the west. Moreover, copies of his work were more likely to have migrated to the east than to the west because in the later Middle Ages that was the direction in which the Germans themselves were migrating.

Patschovsky's decision to pursue an eastward-oriented research program meant that he had to learn Czech and Polish (despite his name, he is a native German speaker whose Silesian ancestors knew no Polish for generations) in order to garner everything possible from relevant Slavic-language publications. But that did not faze him; he is a man who picks up languages like others might pick berries—he is fluent in English, Dutch, French, and Italian, with the Latinity of a Gibbon, and most recently he mastered Hebrew in order to learn what Israeli scholars have to say about medieval Jewish history. Others might have stopped at the Czech and Polish reading program, but Patschovsky moved eastward literally as well as bibliographically, traveling to East Germany and Poland to examine local manuscript collections on the scene. (Visiting Czechoslovakia was less urgent because manuscripts in Czech libraries have been better surveyed in print.) Nor did he neglect to knock on the doors of the smaller libraries of Austria, a job he was able to undertake without visa restrictions on shorter forays from Munich.

In his years of scouring libraries, Patschovsky came across several hitherto unknown and extremely valuable manuscript sources pertaining to the activities of late-medieval Inquisitors. A few breathtaking articles and one major book—aside from *Sources for the Bohemian Inquisition*—resulted from those finds. Here I will limit myself to his premier discovery, made at the Austrian Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz. Like most extant Austrian monasteries, Heiligenkreuz has been inhabited continuously by monks since the Middle Ages: thus its library contains numerous manuscripts that originally were copied in the same location seven or eight centuries earlier. (In the more westerly parts of Europe most monasteries were secularized around 1800 and their holdings transferred to public libraries.) Of course, many priceless items once in Heiligenkreuz have been lost or damaged by time's depredations. The worst blow came from a Turkish raid in 1683 when the monks were forced to flee the abbey. Some manuscripts they left behind were destroyed by fire, others were lost in transit, and others that they brought back still bear water stains from having been packed too low on a boat making its way to safety up the Danube. Nonetheless, Heiligenkreuz's manuscript collection is rich enough to have warranted Patschovsky's on-site inspection in March of 1973, and once in the monastery he asked a question that produced an unexpected answer and some astonishing results.

I refer to the question because it shows that Patschovsky did not hit upon his discovery entirely by accident. What he already knew was that in 1903 a monk of Heiligenkreuz, Florian Watzl, had written an unpublished doctoral dissertation in which he described two fourteenth-century parchment leaves containing fragments of inquisitorial protocols, which were then serving as wrappings for two seventeenth-century account books. Since the only copy of Watzl's dissertation was a handwritten one in Heiligenkreuz, knowledge of his parchments remained unknown to the scholarly world for half a century until the first published mention of them. This was accomplished by means of a religious grapevine: a Cistercian monk told a Dominican nun about the parchment fragments, and her own unpublished dissertation, which referred to them, was read by a Dominican friar, who mentioned them in a footnote of a technical article published in 1955. But the friar had not seen the fragments himself; he had inquired at Heiligenkreuz for them a year or two before

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1955 and had been told that they were "unlocatable"—usually an archivist's euphemism for lost. So another twenty years passed until Patschovsky arrived on the scene. Fortunately he had read the friar's footnote and filed its information on his "Heiligenkreuz" note card (a research virtuoso must both savor footnotes and have a first-rate filing system). "By the way, then," one can almost hear him asking the Heiligenkreuz librarian while taking off his loden coat, "do you happen to know anything about Florian Watzl's missing parchments?" Only a little more imagination is necessary to see the surprise on Patschovsky's face when the librarian says something like, "Yes, they're right over here."

When a research specialist makes a manuscript discovery like this—as thrilling for him as it might be for an art connoisseur to find a genuine Old Flemish oil in a junk shop—he wants to drop everything else and learn all that he can from it. But such pursuit of his rewards cannot be accomplished without effort. In Patschovsky's case, ascertaining whatever new knowledge the parchments conveyed meant not just reading through them (a trick for all but an expertly trained paleographer) to see that they contained protocols (trial records) of hearings held by a Dominican Inquisitor, Gallus of Neuhaus, in Bohemia during the fourth and fifth decades of the fourteenth century; it also demanded employing all of his skill as an appraiser of medieval bookbinding techniques and Gothic scripts to reconstruct the fragments' original context. First he recognized that each of the parchments was a double leaf—each was meant to be folded in half amidst the signatures of a bound book. Then he established that both double leaves had been taken out of the same book. This finding was crucial inasmuch as the first double leaf bore the late-medieval folio numbers (i.e., single-leaf numbers) of 151 and 164 and the second the numbers 233 and 238. If both leaves came from the same book, it followed that the missing book must originally have included a set of protocols running at least from folio 151 to folio 238. Finally, by painstakingly studying the shapes of the letters, Patschovsky determined that both double leaves and hence the entire missing book had been copied shortly after the middle of the fourteenth century.

Having accomplished these technical labors, Patschovsky then put to use some of his bibliographical expertise. Not only did he know about two Czech articles describing two other fragments of fourteenth-century Bohemian inquisitorial protocols, but, unlike virtually all of his Western colleagues, he was able to read them. One of the two other fragments had been discovered in the binding of a manuscript located in the Austrian monastery of Göttweig (thirty miles distant from Heiligenkreuz), and the other had been found in the state archive of Brno (the capital of Moravia, a Czech region bordering on Bohemia and Austria), having been rescued from some unknown bookbinding and brought to Brno from unknown parts. More to the point, both the Göttweig and Brno fragments contained bits of protocols of trials conducted by Gallus of Neuhaus in the 1330s. Proceeding to study these additional fragments himself, Patschovsky determined that both had originally belonged to the same mid-fourteenth-century book that once included the Heiligenkreuz fragments. Patently, what had happened was that a volume, copied around 1355 and containing records of recently held Bohemian heresy trials, had been cut up for scrap parchment in the sixteenth or seventeenth century and its contents scattered for the use of bookbinders throughout Bohemia's meadows and forests and all along the banks of the beautiful blue Danube.

While he carried on this research, it became ever clearer to Patschovsky that his fragments were of extraordinary import—the equivalent not of any Old Flemish oil but of a hitherto unknown Bosch. That is, a total of six parchment leaves (four from Heiligenkreuz and one each from the other two locations) lifted a curtain on events in fourteenth-century Bohemia that previously had been unsuspected and that rivaled a Bosch hellscape in their frightfulness. Before Patschovsky's discovery in Heiligenkreuz, students of the medieval Inquisition knew only that Pope Benedict XII had named Gallus of Neuhaus as Inquisitor for Bohemia in 1335 and that Gallus had waged some campaigns against heretics in southern Bohemia between 1335 and 1340. But Patschovsky's breakthrough revealed that Gallus of Neuhaus had conducted examinations throughout Bohemia with little or no interruption from 1335 to about 1355, that thousands of people were examined in these

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sweeps, and that hundreds were burned. Granted that the fragments do not convey these numbers outright, the conclusion that Gallus was in effect an unrelenting mass murderer can be made on the following grounds: the surviving leaves refer to three hundred examinees and fourteen death sentences; assuming that such references are representative of all that would have been found on folios 151 through 238 of the original book, one reaches a total of 4,400 examinees and two hundred death penalties. And that is a conservative reckoning because the first 150 folios of the missing volume probably contained transcripts continuous with those from folios 151 through 238, and the transcripts almost certainly did not end on folio 238.

The enormity of these figures is best apprehended by means of a comparison. Before Patschovsky's discovery, the best-documented long-term medieval Inquisition was one directed by Brother Bernard Gui (of *The Name of the Rose* notoriety) in southern France from 1308 to 1323. During this time Gui handed down 930 sentences, of which forty-two implied death by burning. (Technically, medieval Inquisitors had no soot from the stake on their hands since all that they did was transmit unrepentant or recidivist heretics to secular authorities for sentencing and punishment with "recommendations for mercy"—but that was just an unsavory legal fiction.) It is true that Gui was active four or five years less than his Bohemian counterpart, but even if Gui had been responsible for the burning of ten or twenty more people, the number of deaths charged to his account would still have been less than half of those attributed, by conservative estimates, to Gallus of Neuhaus.

In short, Patschovsky's findings revolutionized the state of knowledge concerning medieval inquisitorial activity. Whereas experts previously had assumed that the only localities that underwent judicial heresy hunts between 1200 and 1400 were southern France and northern Italy, Patschovsky's discoveries raised Bohemia to the same grim plateau. When he came to publishing superbly annotated editions of the Heiligenkreuz, Göttweig, and Brno fragments in his *Sources for the Bohemian Inquisition*, Patschovsky did not refrain from broaching the human dimensions of Gallus's proceedings in an eloquent introduction: "In those years people in Bohemia were examined, condemned, and burned by the Inquisition on an almost daily basis. Anyone might have been threatened anywhere—and that without let-up since the Inquisitor's tribunal often paid repeated visits to the same locality, so that whoever escaped citation the first time had to fear being called subsequently. Terror as a lasting fact of life—that is what the fragments make clear beyond all doubt." (The book with those words was printed in East Germany as the result of a pre-1945 arrangement maintained by the *Monumenta*.)

Patschovsky's findings have also added immeasurably to the stock of knowledge about Waldensians. Before the appearance of *Sources for the Bohemian Inquisition*, as little was known about the exact nature of heresy in fourteenth-century Bohemia as was known about the extent of trials there; indeed, specialists in the history of the Hussite heresy that swept Bohemia in the second decade of the fifteenth century wrote of the "Waldensian problem" in appraising Hussitism's backgrounds because they were uncertain whether there was any appreciable Waldensianism in Bohemia before then. Now, however, Patschovsky's work renders the "Waldensian problem" otiose because his sources show Bohemia to have been rife with Waldensians at the time Gallus of Neuhaus was making his rounds. Waldensians turn up among German speakers in farming villages and towns, as well as in the biggest cities. Sometimes whole villages, and once a town of about two thousand people, are referred to as being entirely heretical. Altogether, extrapolating from the fragments, it seems likely that about ten thousand people, or about a tenth of the entire Bohemian German population circa 1335, belonged to a clandestine religious society proscribed and hunted down by the Church. Had two pieces of parchment not been used as book wrappings and rescued by the monks of Heiligenkreuz from the Turks, this would never have been known.

Reading late-medieval German Waldensian trial records impresses one continually with the stirring courage the heretics displayed before the ever-present threat of death by burning. Taking as specimens two cases embedded in the fragments from Bohemia, one

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finds that in 1335 a certain Katerina of Jareschau, the wife of a tanner, was fingered by a priest who had learned that she had attended secret Waldensian gatherings held in a hut next to an outhouse in her father's yard. Cited before the Dominican Inquisitor, Gallus of Neuhaus, in the presence of the priest and her husband, Katerina listened to Gallus initiate the proceedings by saying, "You must swear on the holy Gospels that you wish to obey the Holy Roman Church and the Lord Pope Benedict XII, and that you will now tell the whole truth." To this she answered, "Everything which I must do I will do because I am a true Christian," which was not prevaricating, because the Waldensians believed that they were better Christians than all of the Inquisitors in priesthood. But Waldensians were forbidden to swear, and, though Gallus dictated his examination oath to Katerina three times, her response each time was silence. Then, finally, wavering for a moment, she said, "If you command me to swear, I will swear"; to which came the Inquisitor's correct reply: "I do not command you, but if you wish to swear, that is in your will." Five Latin words thereupon tell how Katerina in effect surrendered her life: "Ipsa vero quasi contemptibiliter recessit"—almost with contempt she left the room.

Fourteen years after Katerina had been burned alive—and scores or hundreds of other Waldensians had been burned as well—Gallus of Neuhaus was still traveling throughout Bohemia asking his questions. In Prague, he had called before him a smith named Heinrich who came from Katerina's village of Jareschau. From the evasive Heinrich, Gallus ferreted out the following story. The accused had had a brother, Gotzlin, who had been burned for heresy several years before. Since condemnation for heresy resulted in the confiscation of all the victim's goods, Gotzlin's widow, Elizabeth, and her son, Kunzlin, had been left penniless. So Kunzlin went to live with his uncle Heinrich, and Elizabeth attempted to create a new life for herself. Succeeding in this (by unknown means), she returned to Jareschau some years later to retrieve her son and, in the course of doing so, succeeded in converting Heinrich and his wife to the Waldensian faith. In other words, the martyrdom of Elizabeth's husband and the loss of all her means had only served to fan her heretical ardor; and even though Heinrich had known that his brother had met death by fire, he was still willing to adopt the cause for which Gotzlin had lost his life. Though the records report no more, Elizabeth and Heinrich were probably both executed, but perhaps Kunzlin survived to perpetuate Waldensianism in German-speaking communities in the next generation.

How did it happen that a heresy, initiated in the 1170s by a Frenchman named Waldo, led tanners' wives and smiths to gather by night and defy the Inquisition in Bohemia a century and a half later? The story of Waldo himself may be told briefly. Sometime around 1173 a prosperous merchant of Lyons, named simply Waldo (not Peter Waldo—the "Peter" was fathered upon him long after his death), began to worry about his soul's welfare in light of a report he heard of Christ's words to the rich man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor . . . and follow me." Unable to understand any of the Bible himself without help (Scripture was then available only in Latin, a language he did not read), Waldo sought to learn as fully as possible about Christ's teachings by hiring two priests to translate and copy for him certain biblical books and extracts from patristic theological writings. Then, after studying these texts so intensively that he learned many by heart, Waldo, as a contemporary account put it, "resolved to devote himself to evangelical perfection, just as the Apostles had done." This meant giving away all he had to the poor and embarking upon a career of begging and preaching the simplest messages of the Gospels to all who would listen.

Many did listen, and Waldo soon gained numerous followers in and around Lyons who took up his calling. Referring to themselves simply as "the poor," the early Waldensians were lay people who resolved on evangelical grounds "never to possess silver or gold, or to take thought for the morrow." Having no fixed dwellings and begging for their livings, they went about "two by two, barefooted, dressed in wool, possessing nothing, but holding all in common after the example of the Apostles: naked, following the naked Christ."

Although Waldo and his followers considered themselves orthodox—indeed, they wished to preach against the heretical Albigensians—they were viewed from the start

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with distrust by Church officials for two reasons. One was that their asceticism inevitably tended to put members of the higher clergy in a bad light. Even though the first Waldensians seem not to have criticized clerical wealth openly, their very existence constituted an implicit criticism of rich prelates; the contrast between a voluntarily barefooted Waldensian and a splendidly accoutred bishop must have led many observers to conclude that the former was more Christ-like.

The second and more legally valid objection to the Waldensians was that they not only begged but preached. Had Waldo and his followers not insisted on preaching, they might never have been formally condemned, because lives of poverty and begging were not in contravention of twelfth-century canon law. But lay preaching without license was illegal inasmuch as all lay people were assumed to be theologically ignorant.

Fully aware of this problem and realizing that they would never gain unhedged consent to preach from the hostile Archbishop of Lyons, Waldo and some of his disciples journeyed to Rome in 1179 to bring their case before the Third Lateran Council. But there they were rebuffed. Most likely the Lateran clergy were resentful of the Waldensians' ostentatious poverty; without question they refused to allow the possibility that the Waldensians were qualified to preach. Thus, even though a commission of experts found the biblical and theological translations the Waldensians brought with them to be doctrinally sound, the sticking point remained the preaching, for the authorities were firmly convinced that this should remain a clerical monopoly. Hence Pope Alexander III, with the Council's approval, reaffirmed contemporary canon law, ruling that no laymen could preach unless licensed to do so by their local prelates.

The outcome was that the Church lost the services of a vital lay force and that the Waldensians were rapidly driven into resistance. For Waldo and his followers the issue of preaching allowed no compromise because the Lord had commanded the Apostles to "preach the Gospels to every creature." Back in France, they were not given the local authorization they sought and soon chose disobedience over compromising their consciences. Allegedly, when Waldo was told to desist from preaching by the Archbishop of Lyons, he "assumed the role of Peter," replying, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Whether or not he actually said that, around 1182 the Waldensians were excommunicated and expelled from Lyons because of their insistence on publicly spreading the word of God. Forced to move elsewhere, they found welcome and recruits in numerous cities and towns of Languedoc, as well as over the Alps in Italy. In 1184, Waldo's brotherhood was declared heretical by Pope Lucius III, but this branding by no means put an end to its growth. Rather, by the time Waldo died, around 1205, the movement he founded had penetrated into western Germany.

By then Waldensianism had also become thoroughly heretical. Lucius III had already declared that the Waldensians were heretics, but close attention to the wording of his decree reveals that he neglected to accuse them of upholding doctrinal error, charging them solely with defying authority by preaching. Thus the Waldensians of 1184 were really schismatics rather than heretics. But in the following years they began to formulate their own truly heretical teachings because they had been forced into a position whereby they had to either accept Church discipline and thereby lose their identity or else justify their resistance on the grounds of a thorough reevaluation of Catholic doctrine and usage. Once the Waldensians turned toward criticism, they quickly enunciated a set of heretical tenets that remained the bases of their faith until the end of the Middle Ages.

The main tenets of Waldensianism from around 1200 to 1500 can be grouped under three headings: attack on the authority of Catholic priests; denial of the doctrine of purgatory; and a radically evangelical morality. The Inquisitor Bernard Gui was surely correct in saying that "the principal heresy of the Waldensians was and still remains their contempt for ecclesiastical power." Like the Donatists of the fourth century, the Waldensians maintained that priestly ordination in itself conferred no rights to preach or administer the sacraments: only "merit" conferred those rights. From this it followed that all unmeritorious priests had no sacramental powers and should be ignored. Since Waldo's disciples came to believe that the entire hierarchical Church had been poisoned by

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wealth and sin, they concluded that all Catholic priests were lacking in merit and that the Church as an institution should be held in contempt. Meritorious lay people, on the other hand, could preach, hear confessions, assign penances, and grant absolutions. In practice, such people, usually known among the Waldensians as "masters," became the new priests of a Waldensian counter-Church.

The Waldensian denial of purgatory rested on the lack of any explicit reference to such a place in the Bible. For the Waldensians there were only two roads after death—straight to heaven or straight to hell. Although the existence or non-existence of a "third place" might not sound like a major issue, denying purgatory in fact meant denying some of the most fundamental practices that supported the edifice of the medieval Church. As the Waldensians themselves specified, since all souls either went to heaven or to hell—where all hope for them was abandoned—there was no point in praying for the dead and no rationale for the granting of indulgences (i.e., the pope's remission of purgatorial punishments in return for good works). Given that most monasteries and capitular churches gained most of their wealth from praying for the dead and that the theory of indulgences was a major prop behind Crusades, pilgrimages, and many of the theoretical and financial pretensions of the papacy, the Waldensian position on the fate of souls in the afterlife was subversive of the entire ecclesiastical regime.

The last class of Waldensian "errors" derived from literal adherence to biblical moral teachings. Waldensians refused to take oaths in obedience to Christ's pronouncement to "swear not at all." They also believed that the most trivial lie was a mortal sin, that all legal procedures were sinful because Christ said "judge not, that ye be not judged," and that all warfare and capital punishment was forbidden on the grounds of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and the Gospel precept that "they that take the sword shall die by the sword."

Scholarship is reasonably well informed about the first thirty years or so of Waldensian history because the heresy then was public. Intent upon preaching and proselytizing, Waldensians would engage in open recruiting in one town, and if they were expelled they moved on to another. Sources accordingly report when the Waldensians arrived in such and such a place. But around 1210 this pattern changed—and that was the very time when Waldensian missionaries were beginning to make their first converts in German-speaking areas. Around 1210, the standard penalty for heresy—expulsion from a given community (which obviously resulted in spreading heresy rather than in diminishing it)—was replaced by citation before inquisitorial judges, who meted out penances for the contrite and death for recidivists and the obdurate. All heretical movements consequently were driven underground. In Germany the message must have become particularly clear in 1211 when eighty Waldensians were burned alive in one day in Strassburg (now a French city, but then a western German one); thereafter Waldensian missionaries could no longer announce their presence by preaching in the streets.

Given the stealth imposed upon proselytizing, knowledge of the exact course of Waldensianism's progress through Germany is extremely imperfect, for instead of knowing when heretics established themselves somewhere, all we usually know is when they were caught. Bearing that impediment in mind, we can posit the following: it appears that Waldensianism spilled over into the Rhineland from Lorraine around 1200 and that from there it moved eastward during the next few decades, gaining converts in a wide swatch of Upper Germany—Swabia, Bavaria, Austria. By about 1265 Waldensianism had made particularly impressive gains in Austria. Around that time an Inquisitor reported that forty different Austrian parishes were infected with the heresy and that ten Waldensian conventicles flourished in a single parish.

In its advance through Upper Germany, Waldensianism was transmitted primarily by the zeal of missionaries, but, once it started branching out from Austria, it seems to have been carried by entire communities—groups then moving eastward en bloc to colonize farming lands. By 1300 Waldensianism had become well entrenched in German settlements in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia; then during the fourteenth century it advanced through Hungary and Slovakia all the way to Transylvania. In another direction it reached the Baltic Sea, for, while it was moving east, it

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also moved north—from Silesia to Brandenburg and the Baltic Sea region of Pomerania. Accordingly, in 1395, a well-informed Inquisitor could write that hardly any parts of Germany were Waldensian-free.

Although the heresy made no further territorial gains during the fifteenth century, it held its own in much of Germany until that century was at least two-thirds over. Some of the most impressive indices of Waldensian longevity are the following: two and a half centuries after the burnings of 1211 in Strassburg, a Waldensian minister was arrested there in 1457 while attending to his clandestine flock; in 1460, twenty-seven persons in northern Bavaria confessed to being Waldensians, almost two centuries after the first known roundup of Waldensians in that region; and in 1467, a Waldensian minister was burned alive in Vienna, slightly more than two centuries after the first Waldensian inroads were made in eastern Austria.

Only an extraordinary sense of alienation from the hierarchical Church on the part of numerous Germans, together with an extraordinary élan possessed by generations of Waldensian masters, could have spread the heretical flame so widely and kept it burning for so long. It is notoriously difficult to appraise the intrinsic quality of the late-medieval German priesthood because reports of glaring abuses inevitably tend to overshadow everyday prosaic respectability. Yet, with all allowances, religious idealists surely did not have to look far to find scandal. Some prelates were ignorant of the Ten Commandments, some priests could not say the Credo, and in some churches couples walked about chatting during Mass while others brought their pet birds and dogs.

Probably the greatest impediment to the earnest pursuit of salvation in late-medieval Germany was the cleft between the higher and the lower clergy. The former, recruited almost exclusively from the upper classes, insisted on behaving like the aristocrats they were. They decked themselves out in gorgeous vestments, feasted fabulously, and sought to keep the riffraff out of their ranks like snobbish club members—as Erasmus said of the cathedral canons of Strassburg, "If Christ Himself had sought a place among them his candidacy would have been rejected." Such people mingled as little with the masses as possible and preferred to leave the administering of Communion to deputies. Opposed to these splendid ecclesiastical lords were the parish clergy. Many of them no doubt attempted to perform their pastoral work as best they could by their own lights. But most were undereducated, and many lived in concubinage, not merely owing to their carnal desires but because they preferred to retain resident women to manage their households. The parish clergy, moreover, was vastly understaffed. The result was that most of the laity confessed and took Communion no more than once a year, at Easter, when the assembly-line nature of the proceedings must have been all too apparent.

That the inadequacies of the late-medieval German Church were perceived keenly by contemporaries can be seen from the laments of the "Anonymous of Passau." The Anonymous's obsessive concern was to ask why Waldensian missionaries had been so successful in proselytizing, and his recurrent answer was that the Church of his day was too corrupt to gain adequate respect and too understaffed to do its job properly. In one town the Eucharist swarmed with worms, in another a drunken deacon (who was officiating because of a shortage of priests) celebrated from his beer mug. In Bohemia, Slavic-speaking priests might hear confessions in German without understanding them, and in Austria some priests listened to ten confessions at a time. Aside from reporting such abuses, the Anonymous lamented that most of the clerics he knew were too tepid in their religious commitments to combat Waldensianism with ardor and too self-indulgent in their conduct to withstand the heretics' charge that they were nothing like the Apostles.

Unlike the lax Catholic clergy, the Waldensian ministers behaved astonishingly like the Apostles—for decades at a time as individuals and for centuries collectively. Although Waldo had not foreseen the division of his movement into an elite counter-clergy and a mass of simple faithful, this development was dictated by the circumstances of repression; only a well-trained and dedicated elite could act as the full-time overseers and surrogate priests of a geographically scattered secret society. Few in numbers, members of this Waldensian counter-clergy had to journey on circuits in order to minister to all of their

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flocks, whose hospitality and alms they relied upon for shelter and sustenance. Thus they were always on the move and always lived from hand to mouth. Furthermore, since they knew that they could be denounced at any time, they lived under the omnipresent threat of arrest.

Bits and pieces patched together from surviving protocols allow the reconstruction of a typical Waldensian minister's curriculum vitae. At the start of his career, around the age of fourteen, he had to undergo a "discipleship" during which he would travel in the company of a master. During this time he would be drilled in New Testament precepts. Sometimes this might presuppose literacy, but that was not a prerequisite, for after long days and nights of drill on the road, and after listening to his master preach in conventicle after conventicle, a disciple could come to learn all of the Gospels and the Epistles (the Waldensians' favorite texts) by heart. Traveling on foot—as often as not in the rain (the German climate is damp)—with a heavy sack on his back or at best on a mule, the young aspirant was unable to look forward to a banquet or farmer's daughter in the next town because asceticism was his badge of office.

After such an arduous training period, which normally lasted ten or twelve years, the novice would be examined in Scripture by a group of masters; if he satisfied them, he would then be promoted to the mastership himself. Thereafter he would assume his own circuit, visiting every community on his itinerary two or three times a year. At each stop his main function would be to hear confessions, preach in some safe place, and grant nuptials and last rites as the occasion might demand. Sometimes he might veer from his circuit to win new converts (one minister once allegedly swam across a Danube tributary by night in midwinter to make a convert). Occasionally he might also attend a meeting with other ministers to examine a novice, reapportion itineraries, or learn what was happening in distant regions. With luck an itinerant minister might go about his work undisturbed for a lifetime, but more likely he would have to lie low occasionally while an Inquisitor was searching for him, figuring out how to support himself for that duration.

Behaving like latter-day Apostles and believing intensely in their divine mission, Waldensian masters were able to convince thousands of late-medieval Germans that they alone could open the gates to heaven. Repeatedly we learn from the surviving protocols that this was why the mass of Waldensian heretics confessed to the itinerant counterclergy at the risk of their own lives. In 1315 Sybotho of Schweidnitz (Silesia) said that he did not believe his parish priests could absolve him, but that his "lay" (Waldensian) confessors could; in 1337 Henzlin of Neuhaus (Bohemia) said, "How can a priest absolve me if he himself is a sinner?"; in 1392 Zdenek of Lindow (Pomerania) said that his Waldensian confessors were "good and holy men and better able to release people from sin than priests." A particularly moving example of this faith in the salvational powers of Waldensian ministers is that of Lucia Schroeder of Greifenhagen (Pomerania), who recalled in 1392 that sixteen years earlier when she was pregnant a woman who lodged in her house said she would take Lucia to visit some "good men" fifteen miles away to whom she could confess and then be saved in case she died during childbirth—and ever since, Lucia had confessed to Waldensians.

Once someone placed himself under Waldensian ministry he would be indoctrinated in the principles of the heretical faith. Pungent anti-clericalism was the easiest doctrine to appropriate. Heretics from thirteenth-century Austria called Catholic churches "heaps of stone" and called priests and friars "Scribes and Pharisees"; others examined in 1315 derided the oiling of parts of the body in the sacrament of extreme unction by saying that "if salad is well oiled that would be much better." More specific Waldensian tenets, however, were rigorously subscribed to by large numbers of the faithful. Foremost among these was the refusal to swear—the Waldensian shibboleth par excellence—and the denial of purgatory. Sophia Myndeke of Brandenburg conceded in 1394 that she attended Masses for the dead but said she did so only out of respect for the departed, not because she thought the Masses had any effect; a neighbor of hers, Jacob Welsau, went further and said that praying for the dead was as useless as feeding oats to a dead horse.

Attempts have been made to argue that German Waldensianism was a "superstructural" ideological manifestation of resent-

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ments harbored by the poor against exploitation by the governing classes in a society where "Church" and "governing classes" were identical or inextricable. But such an interpretation cannot be supported on empirical grounds. To be sure, the largest number of heretics whose professions can be ascertained were simple people—peasants and village artisans such as smiths and carpenters. Yet given that Waldensianism was a mass movement, this circumstance is by no means surprising since most medieval people were peasants and village artisans. What historians who call Waldensianism the "religion of the small man" overlook is that sectaries in farming villages or small towns characteristically ran from the top of the social and economic scale to the bottom. Thus the magistrate who stood at the head of a community would be as committed to the heretical faith as the brewer or the butcher, and many heretics—were they farmers or artisans—owned extensive properties and had servants. Moreover, since many Waldensian farming communities were colonies on the eastern frontier of Germany where settlers had escaped traditional manorial burdens, such communities were the least exploited of their age. Finally, Waldensians also existed in considerable numbers in cities, and there, too, their ranks ran from the top of the social and economic scale to the bottom.

The risks of being discovered forced late-medieval German Waldensians to lead tense double lives and, in so doing, create a fascinating counter-culture. In the heretics' view the world was divided into two camps: themselves—the "*Kunden*" (known to God)—and the Catholics—the "*Fremden*" (foreigners or outsiders). Usually the Waldensians could spot one of their number, if they did not know him personally, by the fact that he never swore. But since security was essential, when Waldensians spoke to each other in the presence of a dubious party they would use a code word to insure discretion; they warned about the possible presence of "crooked timber." To avoid detection themselves they feigned orthodoxy by attending Church, taking Communion, and even confessing. Normally, pure inner fortitude fueled their perseverance in such necessary mummeries, but groups of Waldensians in Austria would sometimes attempt to strengthen each other's resolution by chanting upon entering or leaving churches: "Lies are sung there; lies are said there; lies are sought there."

One can easily imagine the sense of relief and uplift that a believer would experience once or twice a year when he gathered with all the sectaries of his community for a prayer session directed by the recently arrived minister. Such meetings would occur at night, most often in barns or cellars; since even children could not be trusted, mothers would send their offspring to bed early when their quarters were appointed for use. Waldensian preachers knew how to drive home rhetorical points with force: one said that he did not grant indulgences because to remit sins was indulgence enough, and another that there was no point praying to the saints in heaven because the saints there were too happy about being with God to care about anything else. The best ministers had so much prestige that their flocks called them "lords"; when they left town it was said that they were journeying to the earthly paradise where they went yearly to confer with Enoch and Elijah.

Because the German Waldensians were so adept at subterfuge, many communities existed for decades without being detected. Alternatively, Catholic neighbors of the Waldensians might know of the heretics' existence but leave them alone because they seemed harmless. Yet appalling inquisitions could be mounted, more or less at the whim of distant or local authorities: either a pope for reasons of his own might order some Inquisitors to swing into action or local powers might decide it was time to "clean up" heresy in their regions much as their modern equivalents might decide to move against "smut merchants." The difference between a modern anti-vice campaign and a medieval heresy hunt was otherwise profound—many headlines and perhaps a few arrests in the former case, enormous social dislocation and dozens of grisly deaths in the latter. If Gallus of Neuhaus's burning of an average of ten people a year in Bohemia for twenty years was one of the most extended in duration, it was by no means atypical in its carnage: in 1315, fifty heretics were burned in Schweidnitz (Silesia), sixteen in Krems (Austria), eleven in St. Pölten (Austria), two in Vienna, and at least one in Neisse (Silesia); in 1336, fourteen were burned in Angermünde (Brandenburg); in

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1392, thirty-six were burned in Bingen on the Rhine; and between 1395 and 1398, over one hundred were burned in Steyr (Austria). Since figures like these survive at random, it is difficult to tell whether the total number of Waldensian deaths by judicial fire in late-medieval Germany was closer to one or to ten thousand.

Once a campaign began, Inquisitors could make great headway in rounding up likely suspects with the cooperation of renegades or compliant Catholic witnesses. The most devastating example is the perfidy of one Claus of Solothurn, a Waldensian minister who converted to Catholicism in 1391 and divulged the names of all the members of his flock on his former circuit in Brandenburg in order to ingratiate himself. But no matter how many names Inquisitors already had, part of their job lay in obliging examinees to name their "seducers" and accomplices. In defense, numerous Waldensians whose trial records survive tried evasion. Asked who seduced them into heresy, they would name deceased parents; although this often might have been true enough, they then would limit their naming of co-religionists to deceased people or others already cited.

Unfortunately for those who wished to shield living relatives and friends, the Inquisitors always had the upper hand since overt lack of cooperation was a sign of impenitence, and the wages of impenitence was death. An Inquisitor could also trap a victim by confronting him with evidence he did not know had already been divulged by others. Gallus of Neuhaus's interrogation of Heinrich of Jareschau shows an Inquisitor at his most inexorable. By the time Heinrich was examined in Prague in 1349, Gallus had been terrorizing Bohemia with his tribunals and path of smoke for over a decade, but he still had not satisfied himself that he had located all of the Waldensians hidden there, and hence tried to trap Heinrich into naming names. Heinrich, on the other hand, knew that anyone he inculpated might be burned, and he thus tried desperately to be evasive, denying at first that he knew any other living heretics. When Gallus became specific and asked how many brothers Heinrich had, he answered two—Gotzlin, who had already been burned for heresy, and Conrad, who had died as a youth. Ominously Gallus asked again whether Heinrich had *many* brothers, and when Heinrich responded in the negative the Inquisitor let it pass. Two weeks later, in a renewed interrogation, Gallus drove forward:

INQUISITOR: Have you now decided to tell the whole truth about the others who were in your sect?

EXAMINEE: But I have already told you the whole truth.

INQUISITOR: Is your brother Henzlin the cutler a member of your sect?

EXAMINEE: Henzlin is dead and I have not seen him for eight years.

INQUISITOR: Do you dare to swear to that?

EXAMINEE: I do.

INQUISITOR: Then swear.

EXAMINEE: I don't want to swear because you won't believe me anyway.

INQUISITOR: That's right, because you're a liar and a perjurer, and lie even under oath. In fact I know that your brother Henzlin was in the village of Jareschau three or four years ago and stayed with you for many days and that before then he stayed with you for half a year.

EXAMINEE: My brother was not with me three years ago.

INQUISITOR: Then how long has it been since you've seen him?

EXAMINEE: I haven't seen him for four years.

INQUISITOR: Was Henzlin a member of your sect?

EXAMINEE: Yes.

INQUISITOR: And how did you know this?

EXAMINEE: Whatever I say to you, you won't believe, so I won't say anything. [Then, after a pause]: He was in our sect and entered it before me. . . .

The manuscript fragment breaks off shortly after this, but we may be certain that Henzlin was caught in Gallus's dragnets—if he had not yet fled Bohemia.

Violent attacks on persecuting authorities or flight were indeed the only alternatives to certain death for those unwilling to profess conversion and inculpate others. For Waldensian believers the resort to violence meant departing from their faith's prohibition of homicide, but when hunted heretics felt desperate enough, they were willing to make this compromise in the hope of survival. In 1338, a serving maid in southern Bohemia overheard

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rumors that some men were planning to assassinate Gallus of Neuhaus, and in 1339 an armed uprising against him broke out that was savage enough for Gallus to call a small-scale crusade to put it down. The Waldensian uprising made the heretics' situation worse than before—so many prisoners were taken that as late as 1346 the jails of Prague were filled to overflowing. But around 1355 an act of violence finally put Gallus out of commission; a dagger wielder dealt him so many blows that he either died on the spot or became too weak to carry on with his work (the surviving evidence is insufficient to determine which).

Another region in which violence against the Inquisition occurred was the area around the Austrian town of Steyr. In 1343, after numerous judicial burnings, a band of Waldensians near Steyr succeeded in setting fire to the home of a persecuting priest, burning him alive as he had contributed to the burning of others. Recollection of this arson seems to have remained in the local collective memory for half a century because, when the Inquisitor Peter Zwicker began proceedings in the same region in 1395, an attempt was made to burn down the home of the parish priest in Steyr with whom he was staying, and Zwicker barely escaped with his life. In the same year a bloody knife was affixed to Steyr's main gate as a sign either of what the heretics intended to do to the Inquisitor or perhaps to any of their own number who turned traitor during his examinations.

Violence, however, was an exceptional response of utter desperation: in lieu of the organization necessary to burn and the courage to stab, most heretics who wished to avoid incriminating themselves or others before tribunals simply took flight. In 1372, for example, an entire quarter of the Silesian city of Troppau, just across the jurisdictional border from Bohemia and Moravia, was composed of German-speaking Waldensians who had fled there from Bohemia and Moravia some thirty years earlier. We learn of a more personal case from unpublished trial records. Johann Oertel, a Waldensian from Donauwörth, fled town in 1393 when an Inquisitor set up a tribunal there. This decision was surely prudent since faggots were soon kindled around living bodies in Donauwörth. But Oertel had a hard time finding refuge away from home. Arriving furtively in Regensburg, seventy miles distant, he sought shelter from a former co-religionist, the merchant Conrad Huter. Huter, however, was too frightened to offer aid because he already had troubles enough of his own: his sister had been burned for heresy, and his wife's mother likewise, and though he himself had abjured his Waldensianism some years before (apparently insincerely), Inquisitors remained active intermittently in Regensburg, and he was still under suspicion. Oertel hid out for a while in Regensburg in the hope that Huter would relent, but ultimately he moved on. Exactly where he went then is unknown, but two years later he turned up in Eichstätt, a small city between Donauwörth and Regensburg—and was promptly arrested there by the Bishop's Inquisitor. Had he chosen another refuge he perhaps might not have been caught, but other Waldensians who fled Donauwörth in 1393 for far-distant Strassburg were rounded up in a heresy hunt in that city in 1400.

Shouldn't the offspring of the Oertels and the Huters finally have turned Catholic? We might think so, but then what do we know about counter-culture initiates who place salvation in the afterlife ahead of all possible earthly rewards? In 1401, a certain Friedrich Reiser was born in a village located a stone's throw from Donauwörth, the son of a Waldensian who, despite all the burnings and disruptions of normal life that recently had taken place around him, had kept his faith. Indoctrinated in the difference between the "known" and the "others" from earliest childhood, Friedrich grew up to become a leading torchbearer of his father's beliefs. In 1418, he was sent to train for the Waldensian ministry with an adept who operated out of Nuremberg; in 1420, he was inducted into mastership; and immediately thereafter he began a career of incessant traveling on behalf of his religious mission that was to continue for thirty-eight years. From Nuremberg he went to Fribourg in Switzerland, and from there he pursued for a decade a missionary circuit that carried him from Switzerland to southern Germany to Austria, and back again. In 1430, Reiser broke this off for a journey to Hussite Bohemia to make common cause with the radicals in the Hussite movement, returning to Switzerland in 1435 as a proponent of a Waldensian-Hussite "popular front." After five more years on a mainly Swiss circuit, he succeeded to a south-

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ern German one delimited by Strassburg (Alsace), Frankfurt (Hesse), Nuremberg (Franconia), and Nördlingen (Swabia). On this circuit he ministered regularly to his appointed flocks, but he was also called away irregularly to attend organizational conferences or consult about crises in Vienna, Prague, Lübeck, and in scattered towns in Brandenburg and Pomerania. Still logging enormous numbers of miles in his late fifties, he returned from the Sudetenland to Strassburg in 1457 only to be arrested, tortured for the names he had to name, and burned. The answer, then, to the question of whether the offspring of the Oertels and the Huters gave up is no.

A more intractable question, however, is what happened to the Waldensians in the second half of the fifteenth century? The methodological difficulty in this regard is that, so far as is currently known, the last heresy trials of German Waldensians—with the exception of a few in Brandenburg—took place in the decade of the 1460s. From this fact some historians have wished to conclude that German Waldensianism was finally persecuted out of existence or else ran out of steam around then. Yet a medievalist who relies too heavily on absence of evidence for his arguments ought to be expelled from his guild: it seemed as if there were hardly any Waldensians in fourteenth-century Bohemia until Patschovsky proved the existence of thousands as the result of locating six parchment leaves.

In fact, the case of Brandenburg—perhaps an exception, perhaps not—is good to bear in mind. In 1963 a German scholar, wishing to demonstrate that Waldensianism petered out in the late fifteenth century, maintained that after 1470 "the only cases that came before the Inquisition were [those of] more or less harmless agitators." But in 1974 a meticulous researcher, scouring the sources for evidence of Waldensian heresy trials solely in Brandenburg, was able to demonstrate that in 1481 the Elector complained about the many heretics in his region; that in 1482 at least two Waldensians from communities that had been seats of the heresy a century earlier abjured their errors; that in 1486 a local bishop called upon residents of one of those communities to be vigilant in fighting heresy; and that from 1491 to 1504 an Inquisitor, working throughout Brandenburg, combated numerous heretics "recently emerging from their hiding places."

Since the German Waldensians were so intent upon keeping their existence a secret, it is in a way fitting that we know so little about their last years. Chances are that there were indeed fewer of them in the second half of the fifteenth century than before; if so, well-coordinated persecutions may indeed have taken some toll. For example, when Friedrich Reiser, under torture, named all his colleagues in the ministry, some hard-to-replace leadership might have been decimated. Moreover—although historians will surely never agree about this—it is possible that there were fewer glaring abuses in the government of the German Church during the later fifteenth century than there had been earlier, making the Waldensian alternative less preferable. But it is also possible that scholars have not yet found all the evidence of the trials against Waldensians that really took place or that the wave of witchcraft hysteria that began to sweep Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century drove Inquisitors to switch from heresy-hunts to witch-hunts even though heretical communities still existed.

In any event, the Brandenburg evidence establishes the fact that German Waldensianism did indeed reach its three-hundred-year mark. After that, whatever Waldensians remained in Germany were absorbed by Lutheranism. Waldensians in the Piedmontese Alps, on the other hand, maintained their clandestine existence until modern times, when they were granted freedom of worship in 1848 by the Kingdom of Sardinia and started building churches in the open. Whether the medieval faithful who gathered once or twice a year to pray by night in cellars would have felt vindicated or troubled by this development is anyone's guess.

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The Immense Inane

VERNON YOUNG

WOLF SOLENT. *By John Cowper Powys. Introduction by Robertson Davies. Harper & Row. Paper, $9.95.*
WEYMOUTH SANDS. *By John Cowper Powys. Introduction by James Purdy. Harper & Row. Paper, $8.95.*

Powys: it is Welsh and pronounced to rhyme with *voice*. John Cowper's more hopeful admirers believe it rhymes with Joyce. There were eleven of them—Powyses, I mean—sons and daughters of a pillar of rectitude, the Reverend Charles Powys. The three most disturbed personalities, Theodore, Llewelyn, and John, became writers and self-consciously thought of themselves as, respectively, polytheist, heretic, and atheist. They broke into wide public recognition within a few years of one another in the early thirties: Theodore (T. F. Powys) with domestic stories lightly touched by moral allegory (*Mr. Weston's Good Wine*); Llewelyn with book-length arguments for the sensual life (*Impassioned Clay*, for example); and John Cowper, Harper & Row's candidate for reinstatement, with novels of a type usually called philosophic, meaning that their author's ability to tell a story convincingly is fatally inhibited by a rage to exhortation.

If you read the critical ejaculations on the covers of *Wolf Solent* and *Weymouth Sands*, as well as the introductions supplied by Robertson Davies and James Purdy, you will hear Powys favorably compared with Dante and Heraclitus, Emily Brontë and Proust, Wordsworth and Dostoyevski, Walt Whitman and a French movie. How many of the critics here quoted are of the same mind today I can only wonder; it is notable that the publishers failed to enlist any of them for the new introductions, choosing instead Davies, a professor at the University of Toronto, and James Purdy, a novelist, I believe. Neither is in the foreground of critical authority, and neither, in these introductions, says an enlightening critical word or gives the reader, to whom Powys is an unfamiliar shade, a useful biographical résumé. Davies confines most of his discussion to an anti-intellectual defense of Powys as a spellbinding lecturer in the U.S.A. fifty years ago, in the hope that readers will identify the populist Powys of the platform with Powys the novelist, who, as Purdy more accurately remarks, was favored only by the happy few (except for a best-selling moment in the thirties when *Wolf Solent* was almost as well known as Wolfe, Thomas). How happy the few were is Purdy's guess. The novels, for him, "are unlike anything ever written in the English language," although *Weymouth Sands* reminds him of Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* and Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*. The comparison, wild enough in all conscience, is comically damning: critical consensus has repeatedly cited these works as the two most unreadable masterpieces in English!

The basic problem of Powys's novels, which accelerated as he failed to solve it (his defenders seem to have been unaware that he had a basic problem) was that simultaneously he wanted to write the human tragedy and deep down he had no stomach for it. Like other modern writers (from whom he thought he radically differed), he knew too much about his invented characters; what was more, he believed people to be less attractive than

✪ VERNON YOUNG is the author of *Cinema Borealis: Ingmar Bergman and the Swedish Ethos* and *On Film: Unpopular Essays on a Popular Art.*

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The 1985 Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

THE SCIENTIFIC REINTERPRETATION OF FORM. *Norma E. Emerton. Cornell University Press. $29.95.*

Citation: *The Scientific Reinterpretation of Form* is an able and impressive piece of scholarship. The subject is aptly summarized in the first few sentences of the book: "From early times people have inquired why natural objects are characterized by a certain appearance and whether this outward shape is determined by a corresponding inward nature. The problem for the natural philosopher has been to define and explain how these two aspects of a thing are related, and how the internal character can give rise to the external configuration. . . . If we understand the form in a broad sense as the order and pattern in nature, acting in and through matter but not to be identified simply with its exterior material embodiment, then we find that from classical times the concept of form has been almost perennial in philosophy." This book is important to the history of science, for the subject has not been treated before at this level of seriousness. Ms. Emerton's book is an elegant and lucid exegesis of an interesting problem; it uses a wide variety of sources and is vigorous proof that the "history of ideas" approach is a viable one.

The Christian Gauss Award

THE ENGLISH ELEGY: STUDIES IN THE GENRE FROM SPENSER TO YEATS. *Peter M. Sacks. The Johns Hopkins University Press. $27.50.*

Citation: The title of Peter Sacks's book, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre From Spenser to Yeats*, suggests an ambitious and fine-grained inquiry, which the book carries out admirably. But it does not prepare one for the breadth of its achievement. Professor Sacks's book speaks for humanity, for the human condition, as well as for some of its most enduring artifacts. In its phrasing, to quote Sacks, the elegy offers "a perspective from which to reexamine the connections between language and the pathos of human consciousness." Sacks speaks of the elegy as at once "act and event" for it exhibits "man in tension with, rather than constituted by, the language that so conditions him." A fascinating aspect of the book is the evidence it provides of the survival of certain recurrent motifs in the elegy, almost as if the form were an inevitable way of registering and controlling our experience of mortality.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

THE CRUCIBLE OF RACE: BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH SINCE EMANCIPATION. *Joel Williamson. Oxford University Press. $25.*

Citation: *The Crucible of Race* is a magisterial work, captive neither to ideology nor to special pleading. Joel Williamson's scholarship in the book is nothing less than formidable. He has gone to his intellectual ancestors, most notably C. Vann Woodward, for information, perspectives, and orientation. He has combed newspapers, archives, private collections, unpublished masters essays, and contemporary literature for the kind of intimate insight into the mind of the South that he strove to discover, and has succeeded in discovering, for himself. It is the history that whites and blacks make in their own minds that constitutes Williamson's real theme. He shows in persuasive detail both that there was more than one South and that the new was unlike the old in decisive respects. It can safely be predicted, not just in festive hyperbole but in sober appreciation, that this book stands a good chance of outliving its age.

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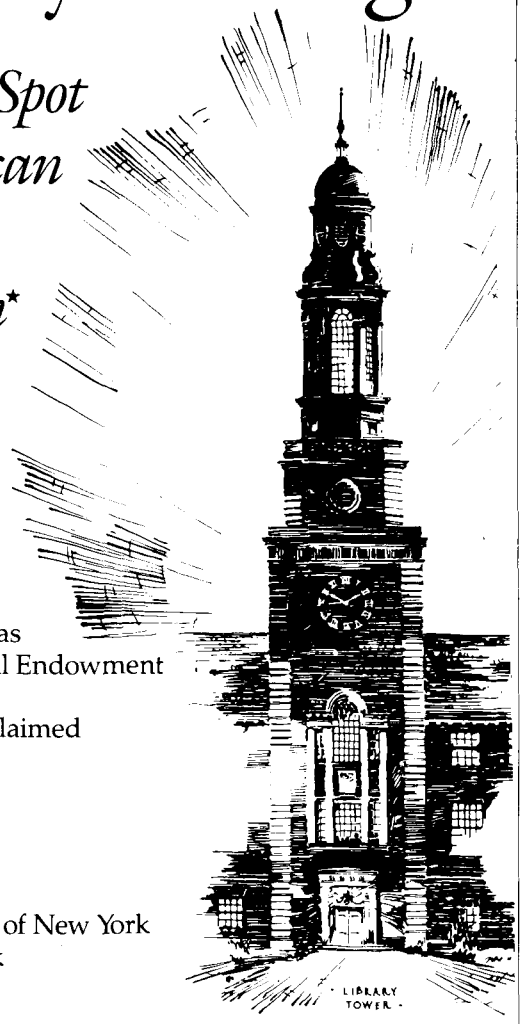

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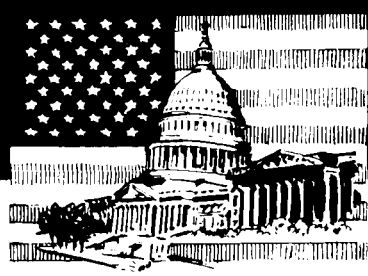

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elm trees or fern fronds in the damp dark mud. Early in *Wolf Solent*, his articulate narrator (whom we need not hesitate to accept as John Cowper himself) virtually disqualifies the author as a novelist: "He asked himself lazily why it was that he found nature, especially this simple pastoral nature that made no attempt to be grandiose or even picturesque, so much more thrilling than any human society he had ever met." If you find the natural world more thrilling than the human, you may be well equipped to write a book about landscape or wildlife, but you are likely to be deficient when it comes to representing people in their relationships with one another. What else *is* a novel but that representation?

Powys was not, in fact, deficient when depicting relationships, but his dedication to the task was insecure. He was impeded by his unconquerable compulsion to speak in his own ego, especially when the moment spurred him to glorify the Welsh, attack the rational life with which science has burdened us, or evoke a landscape, in tune with a kind of cosmic yet futilitarian outlook. At such moments, the personality who is allegedly expressing him- or herself is speaking in another tongue. "The indescribable pathos of all human life" might well have struck Anna Karenina as "something almost intolerable" while hearing those locomotive wheels being tapped, but surely not Perdita Wane (in *Weymouth Sands*), a twenty-year-old girl sheltered from the world, up to then, in the Channel Islands, now setting foot in England where she has been engaged as a domestic companion. Even though she could not have had even an elementary acquaintance with the Dorset countryside, here, early in the novel, is the style of her reflections:

> The marshes stretched away in just that kind of uninterrupted desolation that had the strongest appeal to Perdita. Rushy bogs, where the brackish mud was hidden beneath tall way grasses, alternated with beds of glaucous-leaved, crimson stalked marsh plants, small as mosses. . . . Patches of minute vegetable amphibiums, half-plant, half-seaweed, with cozy, succulent, salty stems, grew along the edge of the broad black ditch that separated Ladmoor from the highway, forming a perceptible contrast to the taller and more astringent sandstone growths. . . .

And so forth: a botanical and topographical exegesis, particularized as for a textbook by someone for whom "uninterrupted desolation" had the strongest appeal.

One of the primary achievements of the twentieth-century novelist is that he has reformed, in countless ways, a nineteenth-century vice in books whereby people, of whatever social or intellectual level, daydreamed and spoke bookishly. Powys's tendency to retain the practice stamps as nonsense the seriously held belief of critics in the thirties that Powys would stand in the eyes of the future with Lawrence, Joyce, and Proust. These men had a unique vision of the world in which they lived, and they forged a personal language in which to convey it. Powys never saw the world in which he lived—not the world at large, which he simply repudiated. He retreated throughout our mid-century, first to Dorsetshire, a long weekend in the country, then to that utopia resorted to by writers who are intimidated out of thought by the mounting contradictions of their time: a Golden Age in the remote past that can only be postulated if you refuse all evidence from history that does not please you.

Of all the writers with whom Powys has been recklessly compared, or by whom he was thought to have been influenced, one only is pertinent. Listen to the first paragraph of *The Return of the Native*.

> A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

For better or worse, it was Thomas Hardy who fired Powys with the ambition to make Dorset a microcosm of the world and supplied him with the topic paragraph in which an omniscient narrator sets the stage, then shifts his focus to a single actor. Here is the opening of *Weymouth Sands:*

> The Sea lost nothing of the swallowing identity of its great outer mass of waters in the emphatic, individual character of each particular wave. Each wave, as it rolled in upon the high-pebbled beach, was an epitome of the whole body of the sea, and carried with it all the vast mysterious quality of the earth's ancient antagonist.
>
> Such at any rate was the impression that Magnus Muir—tutor in Latin to backward boys—received

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from the waves on Weymouth beach as in the early twilight of a dark January afternoon . . . he stood on the wet pebbles and surveyed the turbulent expanse of water.

This is an admirably composed gloss of the Hardy perspective, right down to the particulars of "vast" and "twilight." It is only less impressive by virtue of being secondhand. When reading Hardy today we set our mental clocks to the 1890s; we understand that his periodic sententiousness was the outcome of his being poised, fearfully, at the dawn of an unpredictable century. By 1929, when that century had already betrayed the worst it might do, to write like Hardy, to think as he thought in his novels, was irrelevant to the temper of post-World War I Europe.

Powys—while helping himself abundantly to Freud, the only twentieth-century gift he acknowledged in his literature—remained in thrall to the structural model of Hardy: the cluster of interdependent characters in a pastoral setting, their destinies minimized in the long run by the Euripidean voice. He became progressively incoherent in his account of them. It is interesting, if lugubrious, to note what happened to the Hardy overture in Powys's *Glastonbury Romance*. (It is mysterious that *Weymouth Sands* was published a year later. Since Powys invariably moved from the relatively simple to the apocalyptic, I can only deduce from the style that *Weymouth Sands* must have been completed earlier and its publication postponed.)

At the striking of noon on a certain fifth of March, there occurred within a causal radius of Brandon railway station and yet beyond the deepest pools of emptiness between the uttermost stellar systems one of those infinitesimal ripples in the creative silence of the First Cause which always occur when an exceptional stir of heightened consciousness agitates any living organism in this astronomical universe. Something passed at that moment, a wave, a motion, a vibration, too tenuous to be called magnetic, too subliminal to be called spiritual, between the soul of a particular human being who was emerging from a third-class carriage of the twelve-fifteen train from London and the divine-diabolic soul of the First Cause of all life.

It goes on like that for a half-dozen paragraphs, during which John Crow, the "particular human being," is alluded to as "a microscopic biped," and the sun is called, among many other things, "the great solar furnace up there in the vast ether." The publisher's reader first in receipt of these astral euphemisms must have believed that Max Beerbohm had sent him a travesty of *The Dynasts*.

As strange as it may seem, there are moments of driving insight in *A Glastonbury Romance*, notably in certain sadomasochistic passages that involve Owen Evans and Tom Barker (both surrogates for two of the author's heads): they expose what George Steiner, in his comments on this novel, called "the dark common root of the nerve of cruelty and the nerve of desire." But on the principle (which I take to be a sound one) that bad money drives out good, such illuminations, in a volume of 1,174 pages, are obscured by Powys's impenitent addiction to the Vast Ether, the First Cause, and the Unknown Dimension.

The Glastonbury novel, in which a Passion Play staged in Dorset incorporates Cymric mythology and the Arthurian cycle, is the author's point of no return. From *The Brothers Powys* by Richard Perceval Graves (a biography of outstanding merit), we learn that the sad remainder of Powys's career is punctuated by novels that range from the pseudo-historical to what used to be called "space-fiction"; with them, he is increasingly obsessive in his attempts to apotheosize a pre-Christian, Celtic Golden Age. *Porius*, published in 1951, was a fantasy set in A.D. 499, the hero being a chieftain loyal to Arthur (he of the Grail). Worked over for seven years, the novel was 2,800 pages in the completed manuscript that Powys submitted to Simon and Schuster and Bodley Head. The former rejected it totally; a reader at Bodley Head admitted that "embedded in this mountain of verbiage there really is a book." Powys claimed, among many other such resentful protestations—and mirthlessly, I fear—"to have been an organ of communcation from the departed spirits of the men of the fifth century and asserted that he had been present at the events he described." The abridgement he wrote was nonetheless refused; eventually a firm named Macdonald published the misty epic, and its sales were surprisingly adequate because readers of an earlier Powys novel, *Owen Glendower*, somewhat closer to historical actuality, expected a successor in kind.

No such expectations greeted the rest of his

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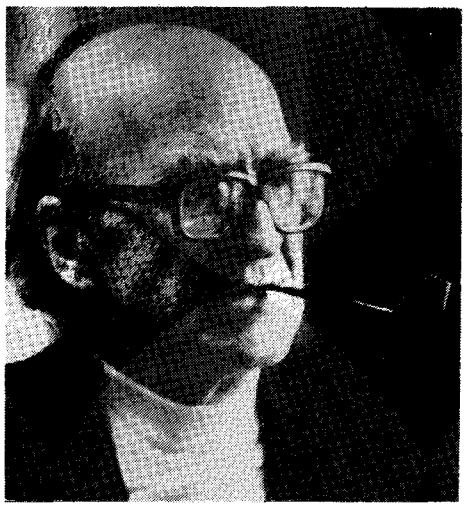

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output. Nothing he wrote thereafter sanctioned his flights to the immense inane. *Atlantis* (1954), which, according to Graves, involved an Odysseus who visits the drowned world and in due course arrives at the island of Manhattan, repeated arguments that Powys had been broaching for thirty years or more: the benefits of matriarchy, the wickedness of priests, and admonitions to science for its approval of vivisection. In a book-length essay published as "My Philosophy Up to Date as Influenced by Living in Wales," he asserted that he was "proud to be the sort of *empiric* who is called a quack, a charlatan and even a mountebank." Intransigent to the last breath, Powys never stopped shouting that he was Welsh, never acknowledged that the ethos of the rebel was a commonplace of his time, never had a momentary misgiving that he had somehow (the adverb *is* his, is it not?) missed acquiring the dignity or the enduring passion of a major talent in prose fiction. Harper & Row has missed that point, too.

Physical stamina he had, for he survived recurring stomach ulcers and the loss of nearly all of his teeth (which for some reason he declined to replace). He died in Wales, of course, in 1963, aged ninety-one, still posing as the village atheist: "I am now satisfied that when I lie dying I shall be feeling a perfect contentment in the sure and certain knowledge that no consciousness of mine will continue after my last breath." He was cremated, Graves tells us, "and his ashes were taken to Chesil beach where he had set a shipwreck scene in *Weymouth Sands*, and there they were scattered upon the waters of the deep."

Ruskin at Aspen

ANTIGONES. *By George Steiner. Oxford University Press. $29.95.*

Reviewed by ELIAS CRIM

So few good books—that is, genuinely perceptive and appreciative ones—are written on classical Greek and Latin authors these days that expectations ought naturally to be high about George Steiner's new study of Sophocles' *Antigone* and her "afterlife," as the Germans call it. *Antigones*, as it happens, is indeed a brilliant effort by the many-minded Dr. Steiner, despite the occasional errors his scholarly detractors love to delve for and the famous Steiner prose style—a modern version of Ruskin, say, addressing the Aspen Institute.

Since his new work cannot, for a man like Dr. Steiner, simply be a very fine book on the *Antigone* and its tradition, it is instead "a study in the poetics and philosophy of the act of reading." Luckily, it is also a very fine book on the *Antigone*, as well as on a number of other subjects quite far afield from the play. This modern midrash—a mélange of exegesis and commentary, alternately learned and fanciful—comprises three separate one-hundred-page essays, wherein we witness an extraordinarily canny mind taking up an extremely subtle and rich Greek text, both to comment on it and to follow out one of its (and indeed the Western tradition's) most fascinating lines of philosophical descent.

The German scholar Bruno Snell once noted how the various genres of classical Greek poetry each reflect—with a sometimes harsh clarity—a particular stage in the development of the Western mind. The Greeks traversed this intellectual terrain (which was rather Hegelian-sounding, in Snell's terms)—from the Homeric poems through Greek tragedy and comedy—at such an acme of excellence that later generations value these poems and plays, not only for their literary and historical worth, but also for their enduring capacity to evoke a kind of dynamic intellectual response in many different kinds of readers. If the eighteenth century, for example, seemed to "hear" the Homeric epics most acutely, the nineteenth century, with its revolutionary ardor for individual liberty in tension with the strains of nation building, found that it was the great Athenian tragedians who offered what seemed to be beautiful antique paradigms of their own philosophical and spiritual struggles.

Sophocles' *Antigone*, for reasons which Steiner ably sets forth, held a special place for the philosophers of the early nineteenth-century German idealist movement. The play was widely held by European poets and scholars of this time to be a work of art "nearer to perfection than any other produced by the

ELIAS CRIM, a financial writer in Chicago, has worked as a house translator for *Diogenes*, among other journals.

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human spirit." One might add that Luther's "banishment" of Catholic mythology from the Northern imagination probably deepened the impact of these rediscovered myths, still in their Winckelmannian glow. We glimpse here the beginnings of what E. M. Butler termed "the tyranny of Greece over Germany" in her excellent study by that name, published in 1935.

The relationship between Hegel's reading of the Sophoclean text in his years at the Tübingen seminary (where two of his fellow students were Hölderlin and Schelling) and his *Phenomenology* of 1807, for example, lies deeper than any non-specialist might have guessed. At the center of Hegel's notion of the dialectic, the "image" is that of a young Greek girl, to speak mythologically. While the younger Hegel thought of Creon and Antigone as creatures on two different "planes of being," a view that certainly does no damage to most people's readings of the Greek text, the later Hegel moved toward a more abstract sense of these two great figures—one that in effect hypostasized them into "the State" and "the Individual" or the like, with a resultant loss of much richness in our reading, since it is this view that became canonical as "Hegelian." Steiner's account of Antigone's position in Hegel's own development may fairly startle any reader who assumes that poetry generally offers little to the philosophers. (It may not startle classically minded readers who are likelier to recall Aristotle's citing of Antigone's lines in his *Rhetoric* as part of his adumbration of the doctrine that has come to be called "natural law.")

Hölderlin's *Gräcomanie* (not a peculiarly German affliction, as Frank Turner's recent *Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* shows) led him to write a rather bizarre translation/paraphrase of the *Antigone*, which Steiner gives a somewhat dazzled scrutiny. He proceeds by invoking a theory of Walter Benjamin (from his early essay on translation) in order to explain the curious self-imposed obligation of the poet in these hallucinatory fragments to "fulfill" Sophocles' text by "amending" it. Hölderlin, through a kind of mantic etymologizing, attempted to go "behind" Sophocles to "the archaic fonts of tragic meaning." The result, written while the madness of his later years closed around him, is a translation "as central to Hölderlin's poetics and symbolic metaphor as it is to the logic of human relations and to the aesthetics of Hegel," Steiner remarks. Despite the very arbitrary sound of all this, not only Martin Heidegger (an evident "Greekomaniac" himself) but Karl Reinhardt and Wolfgang Schadewald, two eminent German classicists, have found in these strange verses "the highest poetry" (which is one thing) and "an authority of understanding in depth," "unrivalled by any other translation or critique in any language" (which is quite another). Hölderlin's *Antigone*, Steiner announces, "is crucial to modern hermeneutics."

Perhaps the best-known section of the Sophoclean text is the "Ode on Man" (lines 332–375), a choral meditation on the "uncanniness" of man and his place between gods and earth. Heidegger, who wrote a very controversial commentary of sorts on this passage in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (published in 1953), was so struck by Hölderlin's translation of it that he pronounced the two texts capable, in themselves, of providing a "sufficient basis for Western metaphysics." This piece of unnecessary hyperbole (Heidegger represents a new tyranny of Germany over Greece, one might say) occurs to Dr. Steiner as "plausible," at least. Gratefully, he is only intermittently given to Heideggerian brooding over "ontology" in this work, and even concludes that the philosopher's view of early Greek thought led him to "radically anti-Hebraic" arguments—a slightly chilling phrase when applied to Heidegger's case.

Yet Steiner agrees with Heidegger that the ancient Greek language "has determined the essential destiny of Western man." Precisely how this statement justifies Heidegger's unbalanced (and obscurantist) valuation of the Greek language—in fact, it is only a handful of pre-Socratic texts that are of much use to him—Steiner does not explain. Classical Hebrew, he would have us to understand, has also influenced the Western sensibility, of course, "from a theological-liturgical point of view," he concedes, as though that compound adjective adequately denominated the authority of Jewish scripture and culture through the centuries. (The Jewish achievement in Western thought, it should be noted, receives a more just handling in Steiner's earlier and equally provocative work, *After Babel*.)

Chapter two takes up mythological themes

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and contains perhaps the most daring thesis in the entire book: the author's claim that there is "an underlying sense in which 'initial' and determinant Greek myths are myths in and of language, and in which, in turn, Greek grammar and rhetoric internalize, formalize, certain mythical configurations." Steiner adds, "Thus the 'figure of speech' will, at its inception, have been the literal persona in the mythological construct." There follows next a very interesting non-argument intended to demonstrate this doubtlessly unprovable hypothesis, suggesting that the proof of it can be established with nothing more than Steiner's orotund assertions—fascinating though they are.

This second section goes on to examine a quick succession of treatments of the Antigone theme: those of Robert Garnier (1580), Jean de Rotrou (1638), Racine, Alfieri, Orff, Gide, and Brecht, among others. It is difficult to think of another critic who could move so deftly through such a diverse list of authors and composers, from several different national cultures and across four hundred years of history, without producing a dullish exercise in *littérature comparée.* Whatever epithets Steiner's importunate manner may earn him, "dull" will never be one of them.

For this reader, chapter three—primarily a selective and yet revelatory commentary on the Greek text itself—generates the greatest intellectual excitement of anything in this book. This section will carry a reader who does not know Greek (and indeed many a scholarly one) further inside the linguistic world of fifth-century Greek tragedy, and with a completely convincing and earned enthusiasm for that journey, than virtually any other such essay one could name. Steiner's disconcerting modesty over his command of classical Greek ("lame and derivative," he terms it) does not prevent his opening out of this play, and very strikingly, through what he calls the "five principal constants of conflict in the condition of man"—men against women; age against youth; society against the individual; the living against the dead; and men against the gods. Whether these axes of meaning are an original notion of the author hardly matters: their combined force in this play would indeed seem to earn it a unique status in our tradition, which is precisely the claim Steiner makes for the *Antigone.*

Other excellent patches of comment abound: on the Greek chorus and its extraordinary range of expression—voice, mime, song, and dance; on Sophocles' "particular art of suggesting the proximity of the gods" while simultaneously summoning up the "incipiently metaphoric, psychologized status of personal and private consciousness" in his human characters (a "haunted humanism," in Steiner's phrase); and on the "hinge of the play," the fourth stasimon, where the gods "are abroad in the city of man" bringing destruction and death.

Much of the power of Steiner's readings in this text flows from his success in illustrating the "hermeneutic conceit" belonging to Walter Benjamin that we saw applied to Hölderlin's visionary translations. "There is, that within an ancient text which awaits our discovery. . . ; vital texts perform a millennial pilgrimage toward recognitions and interpretations yet to come . . . ," Benjamin theorized. Steiner, as he thinks of Creon's inversion of the cosmology of life and death, the tyrant thrusting a child from the upper world into that of darkness, while likewise robbing the chthonic gods by keeping a corpse (her brother) in the bright air to rot, can only reach for superlatives: "No poet or thinker," he asserts, "has found a greater, more comprehensive statement of 'the crime against life.' " Steiner suggests that a careful reading of this section (lines 1064–76) ought also to take into account, for example, the Homeric language in Teiresias's speech, the role of the Olympian gods in rites of the dead, and so forth. Yet he finds himself "almost unable to do so." Sophocles' image of an inversion of the worlds of the living and the dead has taken on for us today, he finds, "an overwhelming actuality." The prospects of life-in-death, death-in-life are in fact now open to mankind. "The full meaning of Creon's deeds (errors) has come home to us," he concludes, "as it cannot have to any spectator or reader before our present danger."

Reflections of this sort will perhaps strike each reader differently. Some may consider the author here to be indulging in self-dramatizing cant that smacks of Heideggerian technophobia. Others may find him, at such rhetorical peaks, stirringly engaged or at least morally awake. The middle ground, to this reader, looks best: Steiner's good faith in

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attending to this text so closely has earned him the right to raise such large issues. What we make of them, of course, is our own affair.

"Honest literary criticism," says Dr. Steiner with no evident sense of self-irony, "is *simply* that which makes its purposed constructions *most plainly visible* and open to challenge" (my emphases). The reader may enjoy comparing this sentiment with the oracular comments that follow a few pages later concerning something the author refers to as "an untapped stillness of understanding" in the *Antigone*. Steiner there confides that as he moves nearer the play, "it is the laying waste of stillness, of understanding heard but not listened to, that is beginning to feel central." He continues, "A phrase out of the Book of Daniel, *ostensio secretorum*, 'the showing of the secret,' presses on me. As yet," he confesses, "I can put it no other way." Whatever this little rapture can mean, what is most "plainly visible," unfortunately, is the critic's pale complexion as he descends, shaking slightly, from his Delphic lectern.

Yet this is a brilliant and worthy book. This reader could only wish that the urgency (sometimes specious) with which the author invests even his smallest remarks seemed to say to us, not, "Notice my depths!" but another and, to me, more important adjuration, "Learn Greek!"

Reading Text to Text

FLAWED TEXTS AND VERBAL ICONS: LITERARY AUTHORITY IN AMERICAN FICTION. *By Hershel Parker. Northwestern University Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN P. SISK

The easiest way to describe Hershel Parker's book is to say that it belongs with quest literature, the quest in this case having as its object the holy grail of the perfect copy-text. One of Parker's problems is that he must hope to be read by, and change the attitudes of, a great number of readers who place a quite different value on the quest than he does and may even think of the ascertaining of texts as a housekeeping chore that pedantry performs for teachers and critics—especially the latter. Critics, even when they are academics, tend to align themselves with the creators who produce texts, not with the academic specialists who get tenure by way of textual nitpicking. If they belong to the "total values" school (Fredson Bowers's designation in a brilliant lecture delivered at Cambridge in 1958 and reprinted in *Textual and Literary Criticism*), the probability that in *Hamlet* Shakespeare wrote "sallied flesh" rather than "solid flesh" changes nothing of importance. To Bowers and Parker such ignorant arrogance is a constant irritant. Parker speaks for both of them when he says that "all criticism may be flawed, if not wholly wasted, when it is lavished on an imperfect text."

The difficulty is that the textual scholars themselves, by failing to agree about procedures and the priorities of evidence, often impede the quest for the perfect copy-text. Parker, for instance, once found so much fault with Bowers's 1975 edition of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, and expressed his dissatisfaction in such categorical detail in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, that Bowers threatened to sue him and the editor of the publication. Donald Pizer, another Crane scholar, stated in print that Parker was not a Crane scholar and did not know what he was talking about. As a consequence of his embroilment over the text of *Maggie*, Parker reports, he was blackballed by the Center for Scholarly Editions, did himself professional harm, to say nothing of damage to body and peace of mind. Parker's professional life, in fact, contradicts the image of the plodding textualist entertained by so many "total values" critics—often, no doubt, as a means of defining by contrast their own creativity. He is passionately embattled with mighty adversaries in what he does not doubt is a worthy cause, and at the same time he is "alive to the comedy some will see in the spectacle of a textualist tromping onto the rarified terrain occupied by critics and theorists."

The internecine battles in the world of the textualist are fascinating enough, but they are subsidiary to the continuing war with the first-line adversaries: the New Critics whose dictum is "that authorial intention is irrevelant to

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interpretation and in any case irrecoverable." The New Critics, with their tendency to isolate the verbal icon from the whole creative context, and especially from the intentionality of the author, fail to encourage the kind of critical alertness that might, for instance, have kept F. O. Matthiessen from rhapsodizing over the phrase "soiled fish" in Melville's *White-Jacket*, which turned out to be a misprint for "coiled fish," or John Crowe Ransom from commending Milton for making changes in "Lycidas" that were in the manuscript to begin with. As one might expect, W. K. Wimsatt, Jr.'s *The Verbal Icon* and the Wimsatt-Beardsley essay, "The Intentional Fallacy," receive a great deal of adversarial attention in Parker's book. Not so expected is the variety of critical enterprises in which Parker detects New Critical influence. Since the 1960s, he says, subsequent theorists, "whether building a foundation for structuralism, affective stylistics, subjectivist reading, an aesthetics of reception, or an aesthetics of feminist criticism," have damaged their own cause because of their uncritical acceptance of New Critical assumptions.

I should point out here that Parker's attack on the New Critics sounds more categorical in summary than it turns out to be in the detail of his book. He acknowledges the generous and thoughtful reading that Cleanth Brooks has given some of his chapters, and there are signs throughout that he has benefited from Brooks's counsel (it might be useful, in fact, to read Brooks's essay "In Search of the New Criticism" in the Winter 1983/84 AMERICAN SCHOLAR as though it were an appendix to the book). Parker is less concerned with what the earliest New Critics actually wrote than with what their witting, unwitting, and often misreading followers did with what they wrote. Indeed, in arguing for the versions of texts he favors, he makes it clear that he is himself an excellent close-reader of texts in the best New Critical tradition.

It is noteworthy, too, that while Parker can be feisty enough in defense of his own positions, he is not totalitarian: he knows that it is quite possible for particular critics to disagree with him and still have valuable things to say about literature. This is important since few of the major figures in contemporary criticism receive his unqualified approval. He is no more likely to spare Wayne Booth or Leon Edel than Fredson Bowers or Donald Pizer. "I have taken pains to couch most of my claims mildly throughout this book, however sweeping some of the judgments will be," he states in his preface. Mildly supported claims are, of course, not what one expects in a quest so imperiled by internal and external enemies, and there is plenty of evidence in this high-spirited text to support an ironic reading of that "mildly." The important thing, however, is the author's un-ironical promise "to persuade you by kinds of evidence you have rarely had a chance to think about, evidence offered here in abundance and variety." He delivers on this promise in a well-ordered book that begins by presenting the terms of the argument, proceeds to a series of case studies (the featured works are Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, Henry James's New York Edition, Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, and Mailer's *An American Dream*) and concludes with a survey of current practice and theory.

Believing as he does that there can be no intentionless meanings, Parker not only welcomes back the author "from the banishment first imposed by the New Critics," but champions "a new kind of literary scholarship" that aspires to close the gap between the textualist and the literary critic by using all available evidence for its aesthetic implications. This often involves desecrating the verbal icon and exposing the Novelistic Fallacy ("the tendency to think that the words of a novel do not matter very much"). Problems about a copy-text can be solved only if the critic thoroughly understands the creative process, and for Parker this means building on a consortium composed of the clinical psychiatrist Albert Rothenberg, the philosophers John Dewey and John R. Searle, and the literary critic Murray Krieger.

One of the most controversial aspects of Parker's "biographico-texico-aesthetico" movement is its rejection of the writer "as permanently all powerful over any text he ever wrote." The writer's second thoughts (determined often by over-cautionary friends, the anticipation of public reaction, or the timidity of editors) are not necessarily his best thoughts. Thus Malcolm Cowley's "chronological" edition of *Tender Is the Night* does not express the true intentionality of the author however he may in his later years have

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toyed with the idea of such a reordering. Crane may have acquiesced in the "textual mayhem" perpetrated on *Maggie* and *The Red Badge of Courage* by the Appleton editor Ripley Hitchcock, but the good textualist will not hesitate to save the integrity of the work from the defections or failures of nerve of the historical person behind it. Thus James's *Notebooks* and prefaces must not be used to argue the superiority of the much-admired New York Edition to earlier editions of the master's fictions. It may well be, says Parker, "that what James did in a given instance was different from what he said he was going to do before he did it, from what he said he was doing while he was doing it, and what he said he had done after he did it."

One might note that in the above instances the authors are long gone and must depend now on friendly critics for their defense. Peter Shaw, for instance, has recently come to the defense of Melville's final intentions for *Typee* (see his "Civilization and Its Malcontents" in the January 1985 *New Criterion*). Taking his stand on the principle that an author's "final intentions" are to be found in his last set of revisions "whether or not they have come at someone else's behest." Shaw faults the Northwestern-Newberry edition of the novel (Parker, incidentally, was one of the editors) for ignoring authorial revisions that would have made it much less attractive to those critics who in the 1970s used it to support their bias against civilization. No doubt Parker, veteran of textualist wars that he is, has learned to anticipate such counter-attacks, just as he has learned to live with the complaint (see, for instance, Thomas A. Gullason's introduction to his 1967 edition of *The Complete Novels of Stephen Crane*) that to reject the revisions of the author for whatever reason is to play the creative writer.

In any event, Parker makes impressive use of his new kind of literary scholarship in defense of the true intentionality of his dead authors. He is no less impressive as he argues that, when Norman Mailer revised for book publication the *Esquire* magazine version of *An American Dream*, he produced a work inferior in ways "he could not have foreseen, much less intended." The difference is that the living author does not agree with him, so we are back with the familiar conflict between critic and creative writer, who is not likely to be impressed with the argument that his ancient adversary is simply trying to save him from himself.

But surely it is to be expected that the gap between writer and critic will be harder to close than the gap between textualist and critic. We should be no more surprised by Mailer's disagreement with Parker about his authorial intentions than, mutatis mutandis, by Hawthorne's disagreement with Philip Young's recent attempt in *Hawthorne's Secret* to enrich the intentionality of *The Scarlet Letter* by imputing to its author an actual or wistful incestuous relationship with his sister. In such circumstances of authorial resistance, one might see that the tension between author and critic sometimes has a useful side effect: it reminds the gap-hating critic in all of us that the Wimsatt-Beardsley intentional fallacy was, among other things, a way of protecting the author from over-ingenious speculators like Philip Young.

One must nevertheless applaud the efforts of Parker's new kind of literary criticism to close a gap that has long been a threat and an embarrassment to humanistic studies. We can be grateful that his book is such a well-written and lively example of this effort. Given the present state of criticism, it is likely to exasperate as many readers as it delights. However, Stanley Fish's prediction, reported on the book jacket, appears to be a safe one: "It should certainly stir things up."

On the Way to the Forum

LAW AND LETTERS IN AMERICAN CULTURE. *By Robert A. Ferguson. Harvard University Press. $22.50.*

Reviewed by JACOB A. STEIN

The *Washington Post* Sunday magazine recently carried a story about young lawyers who were leaving the profession. All the lawyers identified in the article had impressive credentials for the practice of law. Each declared that he found the practice of law a disappointment. Each felt the matters with which he dealt had no connection with any

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great principles. The day-to-day work often consisted of the reading of hundreds of documents in search of a word or two that could be put to some good use for a greedy litigant. Legal work was so specialized that an entire career could be spent dealing with a paragraph of the Internal Revenue Code.

Nothing in the article surprised me. I have heard such comments many times. There can be little doubt that the practice of law has proved a disappointment to many. Was it always so? *Law and Letters in American Culture* by Robert A. Ferguson tells us that in the early days of the Republic the profession was different.

Ferguson's research shows that the Founding Fathers, most of whom were lawyers, were in competition with the clergymen for the role of final authority on the meaning of the great Revolution. The lawyer prevailed over the clergyman and held sway until Daniel Webster's time. Today the lawyer is no longer the great explainer of the mission of the Republic. That responsibility passed from the lawyer to the newspaper editor, and now it resides with the anchorman.

How did the lawyer put himself in brief authority and how did he lose it? *Law and Letters* sets out to answer these questions. In explaining how the lawyer vanquished the clergyman, Ferguson points out that the early lawyer sought for himself a combination of intellectual breadth, artistic insight, and political commitment unique in American history. He found the law an alternative to religious zeal. Legal method was the means by which intellectuals could rationalize and make coherent the unknown new world. Law provided certainty when so much was uncertain.

What qualifications were necessary in order to enter the legal profession? The lawyer had to study philosophy, rhetoric, history, and all of human nature. He had to pursue an admiration of the beautiful, the good, and the true in art, poetry, and general literature. Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams pursued this ideal. The three of them took all learning as their province. One must ask, then, when did they have time to study the purely legal subjects? The answer happens to be that in Jefferson's time there were very few purely legal subjects, codified statutes, or specialized texts. The general education provided what was necessary. In the generations from Hamilton to Webster, the lawyer relied on general erudition rather than any technical knowledge of the law. Contemporary speeches repeated the admonition that love of literature and learning was the necessary element in the education of a lawyer.

Many practitioners had a reading knowledge of Greek, Latin, and French literatures. With that background, it was only natural that such persons would find an outlet in literature. Ferguson tells us that these literary pursuits were devoted to the large topics of justice, the proper role of government, and the defense of cultural ideals. Lawyers who drifted away from these subjects were looked upon as apostates. It was disgraceful conduct to spend time on things that had no immediate great purpose, such as novels and satiric poetry.

The early days were days when the spoken word was the most important means of communication. Therefore oratory had to be studied as the real key to success. The Latin and Greek models set the standard. Cicero was the inspiration. The goal was to be a prince of the forum, and the forum was the courtroom. Classicism imbued learning, speaking, writing. John Adams attended a club where Cicero was read aloud. As Ferguson puts it: "It was, as Adams saw, the combination of lawyer, statesman, and philosopher that gave Cicero's work an example of such authority. Cicero had written volume after volume in philosophy, law, and letters, but he also achieved fame in the judicial courts, held high political office, and fought for liberty against tyranny in the Rome of Caesar and Pompey. A projection of the same balances made the Ciceronian ideal the strongest possible vocational model for lawyers in federalist and Jeffersonian America." The emulation of Cicero brought forth the cult of eloquence among lawyers.

Ferguson reminds us that the Ciceronian period was rather brief because commerce, almost overnight, required the lawyer to become an expert in commercial law, admiralty, and insurance law. The lawyer also needed expertise in corporate practice and patent law. As Ferguson explains: "Technical competence triumphed over general learning and philosophical discourse as case law accumulated." A knowledge of Cicero has no rele-

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vance to a lawsuit turning on the meaning of the language of a bill of lading or an admiralty insurance policy.

Ferguson uses the career of Daniel Webster to illustrate the point. Webster was the latter-day embodiment of Cicero. He was the most consummate orator of modern times. One commentator compared him to Moses as he might have appeared to the awestruck Israelites when he emerged from the dark cloud and thick smoke of Mount Sinai. With all his power and influence, Webster found himself overtaken by the change in the law practice. As the embodiment of the old-style generalist in the law, he found it necessary to retreat before experts in narrow subjects. Webster could not accommodate himself to the change, and between 1835 and 1837 his practice declined despite his fame and national reputation. With the end of Webster's career came the end of the power of the generalist and the twilight of the neoclassical period.

The finishing blow was administered by Andrew Jackson. His election brought in its wake a strong anti-lawyer sentiment. The very qualities that were part of the Ciceronian ideal now inspired only suspicion. The orator using Latin and Greek phrases and references to general literature was doomed. The era of the common man had arrived. The egalitarian philosophy was hostile to an educated elite.

It is interesting to note that one of those who watched all this unfold was Ralph Waldo Emerson. He commented on these subjects in a speech called "The American Scholar," an oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard University on August 31, 1837. In this speech Emerson warned against the attorney who becomes a statute book. He saw the ideal of the scholar threatened by commercialism, and the speech was a call to arms in defense of scholarship.

It could be that there is an additional reason why the lawyer as neoclassical writer and orator disappeared. One is tempted to say a funny thing happened to him on the way to the forum. He stopped to give a three-hour speech on the virtues of the Roman ideal, and there was no audience willing to listen.

One cannot but speculate what Jefferson would think of the practice of law in the 1980s. I am sure he would be astonished at the huge law firms populated at the bottom by drones and at the top by a set of characters laid bare in the novels of Louis Auchincloss. As Auchincloss offers them up, these lawyers are generally not very inspirational people.

Jefferson would not believe the number of law books available. Law books are being published at such a rapid rate that, if something is not done, they will pour out of the law libraries and into the streets. No matter how narrow the subject, there is a textbook to cover it. There is no need for any original thought. Among the ten million or more reported cases, a precedent can always be found. The search for the precedent is now computer-aided. A lawyer need only type a few words into the computer and on the screen will appear the cases related to those few words. What has philosophy, art, literature, and the sublime to do with this? Jefferson's deep pessimism concerning the future of the profession would be confirmed.

Historical Half-Breed

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, 1805–1859. *By André Jardin. Hachette (Paris). Fr 150.*

SELECTED LETTERS ON POLITICS AND SOCIETY. *By Alexis de Tocqueville. Edited by Roger Boesche. University of California Press. $20.*

Reviewed by LEONARD GROOPMAN

"Now and then," remarked Lionel Trilling, "it is possible to observe the moral life in process of revising itself." As an observer of the great transformation in the moral life of the West from aristocracy to democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville is without equal. His *homo democraticus*, that ideal type let loose on the American shore, immediately captured the imagination of the literate public on both sides of the Atlantic and has constituted part of its collective self-image ever since. His philosophical history, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, remains, for the subtlety of its argument, the depth of its insight, and the controlled passion of its style, an ocean of inspiration to which students of mod-

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ern revolution feel compelled to return. Indeed, Tocqueville's life and thought have themselves become part of the history of that moral sea change, the topography of which he did so much to chart and define.

The significance of his life, as he himself portrayed it, is in the pathos of the historical half-breed. As the offspring of a union between provincial sword and Parisian robe, he was by birth and by instinct a Catholic and a nobleman. But after an adolescent crisis of belief provoked by reading the eighteenth-century philosophers, he became by will and by reason a skeptic and a democrat. Divided against himself, he seemed to embody the tensions of a world undergoing a painful, perilous, and unhappy transition. Still emotionally bound to the world of his fathers but no longer able to believe in its historical destiny, he struggled unsuccessfully to feel comfortable with what he thought to be the providentially ordained society of the future. Throughout his life he sought to reconcile his own conflicts simultaneously with those of his times; he tried to transmute what was valuable in the past in order to preserve it and to beware of what was threatening in the future in order to prevent it. In public life, he fashioned from these hopes and fears a prophetic voice that might serve as the guide and the conscience of a self-reforming elite. In private, the prophetic voice often shifted to the pathetic, and the elevated tone became depressed.

Sainte-Beuve, the great literary critic of the Second Empire, wrote of Tocqueville's posthumously published correspondence: "No one has ever scrutinized his own thought more conscientiously than Tocqueville; no one has ever exposed himself more sincerely. Montaigne, who spent his life drawing his portrait, did not show himself to us as nakedly or with as much good faith." Roger Boesche confirms Sainte-Beuve's assessment by providing us with over a hundred well-chosen and expertly annotated letters that reveal both the recurring themes and the continuing evolution of Tocqueville's life and thought. And André Jardin, in the first full biography that follows Tocqueville from the cradle to the grave, traces the origin of the aristocrat's relentless self-scrutiny back to his Jansenist upbringing by the family priest and tutor, the Abbé Lesueur. Tocqueville's crisis of belief may have shaken his Catholic faith, but it seems only to have reinforced that double-edged doubt that Jansenism thrives on. Metaphysical doubt and self-doubt fill the volumes of Tocqueville's journals, letters, and recollections. The silence of Pascal's infinite spaces echoes in the American wilderness, in the cells of the reformed prisons, and most of all in Tocqueville's sense of his own moral and intellectual isolation.

There are moments when the terror of these silences is eased by a note of Romantic delight in the beauty of mystery, as when Tocqueville contemplates the nobility of the American savage or, in a letter to his future wife, invokes Sir Walter Scott in describing the gothic stillness of a moonlit English castle. But these moments are few and far between and dissolve with Tocqueville's anxious curiosity about the *bois-brûlé*—that racial hybrid, part American Indian, part French Canadian, with whom Tocqueville so evidently identified—and with his haunting fears of exile and loneliness.

Such fears are not surprising for a child whose parents survived the Terror by the luck of Thermidor, only after they had watched from prison as the guillotine destroyed their families. The horror of exile followed Tocqueville on his voyages, manifesting itself on at least one occasion as a sudden panic of longing for his native land. The tormenting sense of aloneness would surface whenever Tocqueville laid down his authorial pen or was disappointed in his political ambitions. Moreover, his fears came true; one should rather say they fulfilled themselves: Tocqueville lived his final years as an internal exile, no less agonizing for being self-imposed and based upon his principled opposition to the illiberalism of the Second Empire. As he wrote in 1856 to his confidante, the Russian-born mystic Mme Swetchime, "Solitude in a desert would seem to me less harsh than this sort of solitude among men. Because, I confess my weakness to you, loneliness has always frightened me."

These years of internal exile proved to be Tocqueville's richest in inner reflection. At first the encounter with himself came obliquely, as it had before, when it had been mediated through travel or historical reflection. This time it came in the form of private recollections of the events of 1848 and of his own role as Minister of Foreign Affairs in

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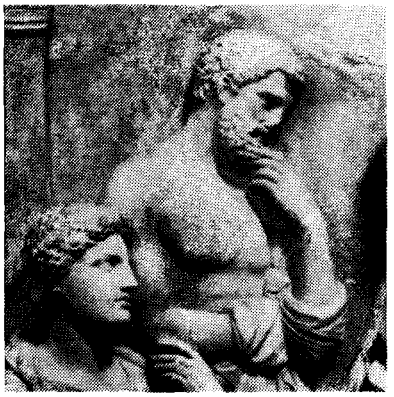

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1849. Tocqueville began his introspection apologetically and guardedly: "Momentarily removed from the theater of public life, and, because of the precarious state of my health, not even able to devote myself to any regular study, I am reduced, in the midst of my solitude, to consider for an instant myself, or rather to view those recent events in which I was an actor or of which I have been a witness." Beneath the historical narrative and the moral judgments of the *Recollections* lies a tale of vocational crisis: was Tocqueville any more worthy of statesmanship than those vain, corrupt, and shortsighted men of the July Monarchy whose failure of leadership had led to their precipitous fall in February 1848? "I see, then," Tocqueville wrote toward the end of the *Recollections*, "that I was less unsuited than I had feared for the role that I had undertaken to play; this experience encourages me, not only for the present moment, but for the rest of my life. And, if I am asked what I gained from this ministry, so troubled, so thwarted, so short that I could only begin matters without finishing a single one, I will respond that I gained a great good, perhaps the greatest of the goods of this world, confidence in myself."

Tocqueville weathered this crisis in part at least by writing his reflections. But the self-confidence that he claimed to have won was ephemeral. Soon the yearning for reputation—which, earlier, in a letter to his mentor Pierre Royer-Collard, had seemed to the politically ambitious youth "the most precious good of this world and the only one worth the sacrifice of one's time, one's energy, and even one's life"—overcame him and undercut his self-confidence. He needed desperately to recapture public approbation in order to validate his personal worth. He lost himself in eighteenth-century archives, labored over stacks of *cahiers* and locked himself in his study to write *The Old Regime*. The book triumphed. But the conclusions he reached only reinforced his pessimism concerning the future of France; and the public acclaim he received assuaged only briefly his sense of being a historically displaced person.

In his correspondence late in life with Mme Swetchime—two letters of which are provided in Boesche's book—from July 1855 until shortly before her death in September 1857, Tocqueville slowly learned to face himself more directly. His apologies for speaking of himself so often and so indiscreetly, which fill the early letters, gradually fade in the warm light of trust and affection: "What has happened to me with you has never happened to me with anyone else. Not only have I not been afraid to let you penetrate what you term so well the reserved realm, but I have felt the desire to lead you there." He confesses his "extreme desire to appear" and interprets both his political and literary work as an attempt to pacify that "vague anxiety and incoherent activity of the desires" which Mme Swetchime identifies as self-distrust. He sees his passion for success as a manifestation of "the incessant effort that aspires towards certainty but cannot seize it." Although he does not further analyze the origins of these desires and aspirations, he is aware of their effects: an agitated fixation upon dilemmas that no longer concern his contemporaries; and a circular, even monotonous preoccupation with "the problem of human existence" that "weighs on me without end. I can neither penetrate its mystery nor divert my gaze; it excites me and depresses me in turns."

Although in telling the story of Tocqueville's life Jardin relates the tale of inner drama, he adds little to the portrayal of his subject's mind. The Tocqueville family archives, to which Jardin has had privileged access, seem to confirm what is already known from the published sources. They otherwise contribute only a few details. A scrupulous biographer, Jardin respects Tocqueville's silences, refraining from speculating on the deeper sources of his character or from drawing inferences that go much beyond the letter of Tocqueville's words.

The strength of Jardin's book is not in the depth of its psychological portrait but in the breadth of its historical vision. It does not—perhaps it cannot—achieve the immediacy and intimacy of insight offered by the private correspondence. But by following Tocqueville throughout his life—which, surprisingly, has not been done before—the biography, like the letters, paints a more complex, concrete, and less melodramatic portrait than that of an anguished and ambitious intellectual caught between opposing forces. Both books locate Tocqueville's behavior within a shifting network of converging and conflicting claims. Family loyalty, patronage relations, male

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friendship, pride, love, ideological conviction, conscience, and, not least of all, ambition, together weave the pattern of Tocqueville's life. His oath of allegiance to the July Monarchy, for example, meant repudiating the Legitimist tradition of his family, but at the same time allowed him to reveal his own liberal leanings, reinforced his friendship with Beaumont, made possible their official voyage to America, and was a gamble on furthering his career. His defense of his friend Kergorlay in 1833, on trail for a Legitimist conspiracy to overthrow the Orleanist throne, jeopardized Tocqueville's political future and went against his own political ideas, but was an act of loyalty to a dear friend and relative and an expression of solidarity with the sympathies of his family. By recounting these and other significant moments, both the biography and the letters convey the subtle play of influences that shaped Tocqueville's choices.

Jardin is at his best on the least well known period of Tocqueville's life, the parliamentary years of the 1840s. By placing Tocqueville within the cousinry of Notables that was the social and political governing class of France during the Restoration and the July Monarchy, he is able to see beyond the legend of Tocqueville as an alienated, marginal, and inept politician. It is true that Tocqueville was stiff and ineloquent before the Chamber of Deputies, that he was incapable of adhering for long to any one of the existing political cliques, and that he was dissatisfied with his failure to achieve the recognition and power of which he had dreamed. But he was also capable of manipulating family connections, exploiting his literary and intellectual renown, and surrounding himself with his closest friends in order to create in the Chamber an independent niche for his "jeune gauche." He was an active and respected leader on prison reform, the abolition of slavery, and the question of Algeria. He was a vociferous opponent of Guizot's alliance with the English—which he considered humiliating to French pride and against French colonial interests—as well as of Guizot's illiberal domestic policies—which he believed to be regressive for the political education of the French. At the regional level, which was the Notable's true base of power and often his primary concern, Tocqueville consolidated his position in his native Normandy through personal ties, active participation on the departmental General Council, and lobbying in Paris on behalf of local interests. Although he may not have been the most dynamic and effective politician, neither was he—as he himself (and Beaumont as well) would sometimes suggest—a kind of Buridan's ass, too idealistic or too ambitious to choose between equally unpalatable bales of political hay. In an age when politics was often carried on in the style of an overgrown salon, he did not stand at the very center of attention, but neither was he a perennial wallflower.

In August 1856, soon after the publication of *The Old Regime*, Tocqueville wrote to his friend Jean-Jacques Ampère: "The unity of my life and my thought is the one thing in the world I most wish to conserve in the eyes of the public; the man is as concerned with that as the writer." Jardin, whose treatment of Tocqueville's major works is synoptic and unimaginative, closes his biography with a brief epilogue in which he tries to sew together Tocqueville's thought and action with the thread of virtue. Jardin asserts that, despite Tocqueville's occasional excesses of ambition, it was virtue, in the form of an inherited, deeply felt, aristocratic sense of obligation to public service, that guided and organized Tocqueville's efforts. Given the unresolved tensions of Tocqueville's life, the complexity and ambivalence of his thought, and the variety of his endeavors, it is difficult to imagine any single solution to the enigma of unity; but if one were needed, Jardin's choice of virtue seems as well chosen, and as encompassing, as any.

The unity that Tocqueville wished for—even its appearance—may be as unattainable as the metaphysical certainty he sought, as unrealizable as the political reputation he desired, and as fragile as the self-confidence he once claimed to have felt. It is even fashionable nowadays to argue that such unity is impossible, for if the writer exists at all, it is said, he inhabits a different and distinct world from the man. Yet Tocqueville's life and work seem near neighbors. America for him was a culture of doubt, a land of "unknowing Cartesians" in which beliefs, attitudes, and mores derive from the social insecurity and intellectual uncertainty that haunts the democratic, and the modern, mind. The power of public opinion, like the power of a Bonapartist des-

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pot, to shape and control the mind and will also follows from the lone individual's need to escape that gnawing ignorance of where he stands, what he believes, how he should act, and who he is. I do not mean to imply an identity between Tocqueville and the democratic man he imagined, but rather to suggest a dialectical relation between them—as there is between *The Old Regime* and the man Alexis de Tocqueville. To borrow the title of a work on Montaigne, it is a "dialectic of selfhood" in which the book and the man are partners in the elaboration of a single self. Is it merely a historian's dream to imagine that now and then it might be possible to observe Tocqueville in the process of revising his—and our—moral life at the same time that he is revising his manuscripts? If it were possible, then the analogy with Montaigne, begun by Sainte-Beuve, might be extended, for then we could say of Tocqueville what Montaigne said of himself: "I have no more made my book than my book has made me." With Jardin's biography and Boesche's *Selected Letters*, we can already answer for Tocqueville the Socratic question posed by Montaigne: "Have I wasted my time by taking stock of myself so continually, so carefully?"

Unplain Jane

THE LIFE OF JANE AUSTEN. *By John Halperin. Johns Hopkins University Press. $25.*

Reviewed by ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN

It is a tribute to the enduring appeal of Jane Austen's novels that writers continue to produce fiction inspired by her work, as though loath to leave the imaginative world she created. No fewer than seven continuations have been published of her fragmentary novels *The Watsons* and *Sanditon*, while this year brings Joan Aiken's *Mansfield Revisited*, a sequel to *Mansfield Park*, and Barbara Ker Wilson's *Antipodes Jane*, in which the author herself is imagined to have gone traveling to Australia. Scholarly works have likewise proliferated over the years, although biographers have been hampered by the fact that the author had a retiring disposition and led one of the least eventful lives in the history of English letters. By her own wishes, the secret of her authorship was known to few outside her immediate family (those three novels of hers in print during her lifetime were published anonymously), and after her death the family continued to honor her desire for privacy. The memorial notice by her brother Henry in the 1817 edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* gives only a highly idealized sketch of the writer in stilted language, while Cassandra Austen, her sister's confidante, destroyed those of Jane's letters that she deemed too personal, cutting up others with scissors to excise offending passages. As a result, the surviving letters seem disappointingly trivial, devoted to domestic matters and gossip (some of it quite malicious).

Even more provoking to the modern reader is the lack of an adequate portrait of Jane Austen. The well-known illustration in James Edward Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* was engraved over fifty years after her death; the only authentic likeness is a crude pen-and-pencil sketch by Cassandra in which Jane stares off in the distance, tight-lipped, with arms crossed. Although it gives some sense of her strength of character—unlike the conventionally pretty figure of the later engraving—it is undeniably amateurish. Professional portraits were reserved for the male Austens: we have numerous representations of her father and five handsome brothers, but (with the exception of a silhouette of dubious provenance) no likeness of Jane, save Cassandra's depiction of her. An unmarried woman living as the dependent of her relations would hardly have merited more.

Later descendants of the brothers have hastened to make amends for this neglect in portraiture by producing numerous biographies, memoirs, and editions of the letters and unpublished writings of their famous kinswoman. Writing about Jane Austen, in fact, became something of a family preserve in the years before the task was taken over by the academic establishment. John Halperin, a professor of English at Vanderbilt University, has now attempted a new critical biography of Jane Austen—a daunting task, one would think, in view of the many studies of her already existing. What more can be said?

ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN's reviews have appeared in *Commentary*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and other journals.

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In fact, Professor Halperin has unearthed few if any new facts about Jane Austen and differs from his predecessors mainly in matters of emphasis. Perhaps because he is treading such a well-worn path, he has to make the most of his conjectures as he reads between the lines of the letters and searches the novels for veiled biographical references. The Jane Austen he claims to see reflected in her writings is an unhappy creature, distressed by her poverty and spinsterhood, envious of others, somewhat coldhearted—in this resembling her niece, Fanny Knight—and filled with dislike of her hypochondriacal mother and her noisy little nieces and nephews. (Halperin's two favorite adjectives describing Jane are *neurasthenic* and *judgmental*.) By her early twenties he finds "sexual desperation" in her casual remark disparaging a forthcoming ball, and he notes that at this time her "'peace' was surely on the brink of destruction"; a few pages later we learn that the novelist "must have felt trapped and helpless," and later still that her thirtieth birthday was "probably . . . not one of her more hilarious days." On the other hand, her failure to snare a husband may have been just as well, since, according to Halperin, "she may have been a woman incapable of love."

Well, perhaps. But even if Jane Austen had been the neurotic spinster Halperin portrays, it is far from certain that marriage would necessarily have improved her lot. Quite possibly she would have died far earlier from childbirth, like her grandmother and three of her sisters-in-law (one of whom died after giving birth to her eleventh child in fifteen years). Even had she survived, the duties of raising a family would doubtless have drawn her attention away from writing. As it was, Jane Austen's genius required certain favorable conditions in order to flourish. Of her six completed novels, three were written during a sustained burst of creativity in the late 1790s, and three others during 1811–16, after over a decade of near-total silence. She required the security of a settled life to write, first at her father's rectory at Steventon and later at Chawton cottage. The intervening years spent at Bath and Southampton gave her experience that was later put to use in her fiction, but these years were not conducive to writing, except during the few months when she began—and abandoned—*The Watsons*.

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That no letters of hers survive from the period between May 1801 and September 1804 also suggests that this was not a happy time for her. Certainly she disliked being uprooted from rural Hampshire. The story goes that when Jane returned home one day from a visit with a friend, her mother announced, without any prior warning, "Well, girls, it is all settled. We have decided to leave Steventon and go to Bath," and Jane fainted away on the spot.

Jane Austen's mother is a troubling figure for Professor Halperin, who sees in her the model for many of the indolent, silly parent figures in the novels. A woman who took to her bed in middle age to nurse her ill health, she lived to the age of eighty-eight, surviving her husband and two adult children. She is rarely mentioned in Jane Austen's letters; typically, when a family member has died, Jane reports that her mother is bearing up surprisingly well under the blow. When Jane herself was fatally ill and was removed to Winchester for an attempted cure, her mother declined to visit her during her two-month stay, even though the journey was a mere sixteen miles. Halperin allows us to draw the appropriate inferences from these facts.

In the absence of sufficient biographical evidence, one can of course always choose to accentuate the positive or the negative in Jane Austen's life. It is curious to think that, except when visiting, she never had a bedroom of her own but always had to share quarters with her sister; and that at Chawton her writing was done in a family sitting room, open to interruption at any time, with her only warning the squeaking of a door hinge that had been left unrepaired at her request. Then, too, on her father's death she was left virtually penniless, existing on the generosity of brothers who had their own families to raise. Too poor to possess more than a donkey cart, the Austen ladies had to limit their visiting to times when their relatives' carriages were available. Nor could Jane have expected to make her way in the world through writing, given the few successful women of letters at the time and her own temperamental aversion to the role of literary lioness.

Still, her life had its compensations. If the class-bound Georgian society into which she was born had yet to approve of the notion of "a career open to talents," her social status automatically ensured her a sense of equality to her richer, highborn relations, whom she visited with sufficient frequency; indeed, the very difficulties of travel encouraged a hospitality to long visits on a scale unthinkable today. It was also an age of patronage, whereby wealthy, childless couples might settle whole estates on distant kin—like the Knights, who adopted her brother Edward. (Her father had also been a beneficiary of Knight generosity, from which he received his livings.) And of course, Jane Austen had the benefit of an unusually close and cultured family to encourage her writing, which achieved a measure of fame even during her lifetime. Professor Halperin, eager to find evidence of family ill-feeling, notes darkly that few of her brothers' children were named Jane; but this means little, since children were most frequently named from filial piety or prudential motives, neither of which would have applied in her case. (Both her brother and nephew named their children Cholmeley in honor of a disagreeable but wealthy aunt, Mrs. Leigh Perrot, in the hope of being remembered in her will.)

More than other biographies, Professor Halperin's relies heavily on Jane Austen's letters, reproducing their contents in detail and commenting on them. The method has the virtue of bringing into view her day-to-day concerns in her own incomparable language: her remark that she has met a lady "at once naked and expensively dress'd"; her comment to her niece Anna that the girl's brother "is getting very near our own age, for *we* do not grow older, of course"; her wicked joking to Cassandra that "We are having a steady Cook, & a young giddy Housemaid, with a sedate middle aged Man, who is to undertake the double office of Husband to the former & sweetheart to the latter. No children of course to be allowed on either side."

Yet the biographer's method also gives the impression of concentration on minutiae and a lack of proportion. Of some 350 pages of text, nearly half are on the last six years of her life, with fully a hundred pages devoted to her last three years, 1814–17. Worse, instead of summarizing his conclusions from the available evidence, Halperin obsessively repeats the same points again and again in commenting on the letters. To take one instance, the author, seeking to dispute the notion that Jane Austen was not terribly interested in affairs of

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state, seizes on every reference to national or world affairs that he can in her letters. This constant tugging at the reader's sleeve betokens an inability to organize ideas concisely and an insensitivity to language: the writer is evidently unaware of the stupefying repetitiveness of his prose.

Coming from a prolific literary scholar and bearing the imprimatur of a distinguished university press, *The Life of Jane Austen* is the first critical biography of the novelist to appear in several years; more's the pity, then, that the book is so disappointing, its sheer dullness relieved only by eccentricity. Halperin's idiosyncratic method of documentation, for example, makes it next to impossible to look up anything in his many pages of notes. (There are no footnote numbers in the text, and the citations in the back are not identified by page number.) The explanatory apparatus at the front of the book is similarly exasperating, for a pair of partial family trees of the Austens are woefully incomplete, leaving out many of the relations spoken of in the text, while including an irrelevant genealogy of two Austen in-laws (down to their second cousin once removed). The author himself seems to have been confused by the complicated family relationships, since in the text he mistakes Jane's aunt Philadelphia Hancock (her father's sister) for Jane's cousin Philadelphia Walter (the daughter of her father's half brother), not realizing that they are two distinct individuals. It would be tedious to multiply examples of this kind of authorial negligence. Most lovers of Jane Austen, should they feel the urge to look beyond the novels themselves, will find their needs better served by other studies already available.

Intimate Formalities

LOUISE BOGAN: A PORTRAIT. *By Elizabeth Frank. Knopf. $22.95.*

Reviewed by WENDY HIRSCH

At last we have the life behind the poems. In Elizabeth Frank's well-researched biography of the poet and critic Louise Bogan, we

WENDY HIRSCH is a graduate student in English literature at Columbia University.

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finally get some sense of the origins, education, and workaday life of an august and highly impersonal poet. Writing in a time of poetic experimentation with free verse, Bogan kept to the conventions of the formal lyric. Her passionate austerity has irritated and fascinated the few critics who have attended to her, particularly since in both her poetry and prose she was extremely reticent about her private life.

Louise Bogan was born in 1897 in the small mill town of Livermore Falls, Maine. An outsider from the beginning, Bogan was from an Irish-Catholic family that lived in the Protestant section of town. While still young, she moved with her family to New Hampshire, where her mother began an active secret life of afternoon affairs, sometimes bringing Louise along. She recalls in her memoirs a moment of what might have been her artistic awakening after seeing some flowers in a vase: "They were mine as though I had invented them. The sudden marigolds." After another move, this time to Boston, Louise Bogan attended the Latin School, where she received formal training in the classics. During these years she began taking art lessons from Miss Cooper, about whom Bogan was to write in her memoir "Letdown." After seeing her teacher holding a half-eaten doughnut and a greasy bag, Bogan felt that "[Miss Cooper] died and the room died. . . . She had betrayed me. . . . She had let me down; she had appeared as she was: a tired, old woman who fed herself for comfort. With perfect ruthlessness I rejected her utterly." What Louise Bogan learned from her unstable and damaging childhood was the need to be perfect.

After a year at Boston University, Louise Bogan married Curt Alexander, an army man, and moved with him to New York. War was declared a year later in 1917; he was sent to Panama, and she followed, pregnant. Finding that she had nothing in common with the other army wives or her husband, she soon returned to Boston. Her husband later returned to live with her, but she left him and deposited her daughter, Maidie, with her parents and moved back to New York. (Her husband died a year later.) It was then, through her association with the long-gone Greenwich Village literary crowd, that she began a disastrous affair with Joe Coffey, a sort of Irish Robin Hood, who was later declared insane. (Bogan, though scandalized by Coffey's insanity, liked to refer to herself as having been "a gangster's moll.") As Frank notes, "By the time she was twenty-two, Bogan had been a wife and mother, had left her husband and given her child to her parents' keeping, had become a widow and a betrayed lover within the same year, and had established a solid and growing reputation as a gifted lyric poet."

Later, in 1923, Bogan published her first book of poetry, *Body of This Death*. The same year she married the writer Raymond Holden, beginning an alliance wrenched by violent jealousy on her part. Fortunately, at the same time, she met some literary friends she was to keep for much of her life, particularly Edmund Wilson and Rolphe Humphries. In 1929 she published her second collection, *Dark Summer*, ending the decade largely overlooked by a generation excited by Eliot's innovations with free verse.

In the early thirties Louise Bogan suffered two severe depressions, both times checking herself into the Neurological Institute in New York. Her second breakdown occurred after a Guggenheim year in Europe, during which she made accusations against Holden about his marital fidelity. At that time she vowed in her journal: "Never do anything out loud but exchange a few general opinions on general topics with as much ease and wit as possible." Shortly thereafter she returned home to discover that Holden had indeed been having the affair he had so vehemently denied. Eventually recovering from her second depression, she wrote in a letter: "It's just as well to know that the ninth circle of hell has an icy floor by experience: by having laid the living hand upon it."

Bogan divorced Holden and decided, at thirty-seven, that there could be no new love. Willfully dulling herself from emotion, she had days, as she wrote in her journal, "in which nothing moves in you, since to feel anything would be to feel tears." At this point, Bogan was living with her daughter and had a more active social life, particularly with Edmund Wilson. Despite her determination not to fall in love, she drifted into an affair with the poet Theodore Roethke, who is supposed to have remarked: "Louise, you're a great

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minor poet and I'm a bastard, but kiss me." She finished, in 1937, her third collection of poetry, *The Sleeping Fury*, which Frank considers to be Bogan's best, and continued writing reviews for the *New Yorker*, which she had begun to do in 1931. During this time, Bogan, who insisted that the artist's business was with himself and that poetry is "private feeling, not public speech," felt herself apart from the literary Left.

When in the late 1930s she traveled to Ireland, she became terrified in Dublin of fanatics and of people "so ugly that it was painful." She was rescued from her terror by an American electrician who was to become her lover for the next eight years. Once home, she moved to an apartment, where she was to remain for the rest of her life, with a view of the Neurological Institute.

After publishing *Poems and New Poems* in 1941, Louise Bogan did not write a single poem for seven years. She continued her reviews, though, and began to give readings, to teach, and to translate Goethe. In 1954 her *Collected Poems 1923–1953* won the Bollingen Prize. The last fifteen years of her life were difficult ones; she wrote very little poetry, struggled to produce her *New Yorker* reviews, and suffered another severe depression. She died in 1970, alone in her apartment.

In Frank's account of Louise Bogan's life, there are a few inconsistencies. From the fact that Bogan writes so little about her father, Frank concludes that he had no great influence on her. From the fact that Bogan writes so little about her brother, Frank concludes that he had such a great influence on her that she could not write much about him. Bogan's mother is early on the villain, with her screams and tantrums "possibly" informing Bogan's poem, "My Voice, Not Being Proud."

As for Bogan's prose, Frank provides the first comprehensive consideration ever given to Bogan's memoirs, fiction, and criticism. Brief memoirs were published in the *New Yorker* as "Journey Around My Room" (and later reprinted in Ruth Limmer's book of the same title). Bogan's fiction, written mostly in the thirties, has unfortunately never been collected. Although her writing of fiction was for the most part confined to this one period of her life, this was not so with her criticism. It is

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therefore somewhat misleading to read about Bogan's criticism in one chapter at the end of the book. She did not, as the organization of the book suggests, turn to criticism when she was no longer able to write poetry. For thirty-eight years Bogan helped shape America's literary tastes as poetry critic for the *New Yorker*.

Throughout the discussion of Bogan's poetry, Frank's bias against traditional poetic form is clear. One begins to think that Bogan wrote good poetry in spite of herself. Again and again, Frank refers to "the prison of form," "the shield of form," and "the laws of form." In claiming that "the formal perfection of Bogan's verse enhances the poetry's distance from the personal," Frank implies that formal verse tends to be impersonal, and that this is not simply a consequence, but an aim, of formal verse. Formal poetry for Bogan, asserts Frank, was "a means of separating and differentiating herself from persons and situations." Underlying Frank's attitude is the common assumption that form, as a set of arbitrary rules governing meter and rhyme, binds, distances, and separates. Frank barely mentions Bogan's essay "On the Pleasures of Formal Poetry," in which she sets out the essential creative and liberating nature of form. Nor does Frank sufficiently attend to Bogan's poem "Single Sonnet," in which passion is freed only through poetic form. Bogan articulated her passions and griefs, not within, but through the formal elements of poetry.

Frank intersperses her narrative of Bogan's life with examinations of the poems, generally discussing the poetry in the context of the volumes in which they appeared. She attempts what has not been done before: to assess the poetry by the periods of Bogan's poetic development. Rather neatly she sees the poems in *Body of This Death* as ending in defiant self-assertion, those in *Dark Summer* ending in uncertain peace, and those in *The Sleeping Fury* ending in peace. This progression in poetic mood, which presumably parallels a progression in Bogan's psyche, corresponds to what Frank sees as a new relaxation and flexibility of form. The implication here is that formal poetry is necessary to hold together an unstable psyche—that is, Frank suggests that formal verse was a psychological necessity rather than an informed artistic choice. Frank also sees a change in Bogan's work after her marriage to Holden, perceiving her to be influenced by his emphasis on natural observation. This resulted in a new attention to nature in *Dark Summer*. But I wonder whether this "new" emphasis is quite so new as Frank would have us believe. One thinks here about the rich vein of nature in such earlier poems as "Medusa," "Statue and Birds," "The Crows," "Memory," or "Last Hill in a Vista."

Occasionally Frank goes beyond noting the time and place of composition, quoting a stanza or two, and making a brief statement of what the poem is about. In her discussion of "The Sleeping Fury," for instance, she begins by providing some interesting facts about the composition of the poem and remarking upon its origin in the Roman sculpture "Erinni Addormentata." She also refers to Bogan's reading of Rilke at that time, rightly pointing out a common interest in "things." She then makes some accurate parallels with Yeats, discussing in particular the two poets' prose renderings of certain poems. She also quotes some previously unpublished journal entries describing the furies and a letter written in the middle of the composition of the poem that mentions her struggle with it. By doing so, Frank gives us a glimpse into the workings of Bogan's creative mind, but the conclusions here, as elsewhere, seem to be of the usual kind—that the peace expressed in the poem may be attributed to "psychic reconciliation with her mother" and is evidenced by a relaxation of formal control.

Sometimes Frank's interpretations are simply wrong. Bogan's poem "The Daemon" is anything but a "gentle lyric" offering "reassurance" and "lightness for lightness." It is instead a poem about the compulsion to write, about having to display vulnerabilities and wounds. The speaker in the poem pleads: "Must I show outright / The bruise in the side?" and the daemon responds: "It said *Why not*? / It said *Once more*." Since Bogan clearly identifies her muse as a daemon, Frank's misinterpretation seriously calls into question her otherwise fine analyses of Bogan's writing blocks.

What is missing in this book is a consideration of Bogan's extremely complicated feelings about being a woman writer. Frank dras-

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tically understates the issue when she writes that "Bogan's insights into her own sex are often uneasy." Frank simplifies, for instance, Bogan's criticism of Edna St. Vincent Millay, suggesting that Bogan's response to Millay's crisis of maturity was entirely sympathetic. In the part of Bogan's review (published in *A Poet's Alphabet*) that Frank does not quote, Bogan advises: "It is a dangerous lot, that of the charming, romantic public poet, especially if it falls to a woman." Clearly Bogan thought that Millay's problem was related to her sex as well as age. Frank only mentions Bogan's essay "The Heart and the Lyre" (1947), a crucial piece for understanding her suspicion and praise of the female poetic sensibility.

In clear, direct prose, Frank narrates a literary life that most know little about. But even though Frank is usually careful to approach her subject with "wonder and humility," she becomes less helpful when she limits the poems by interpreting them mostly in light of the life. The impulse to write poetry is distinct from the talent that produces good poetry. Louise Bogan's is a case of a sad and often terrible life issuing in elegant, often beautiful poetry.

The Right and Wrong Stuff

COTTON MATHER AND BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: THE PRICE OF REPRESENTATIVE PERSONALITY. *By Mitchell Robert Breitwieser. Cambridge University Press.* $27.95.

Reviewed by T. H. BREEN

Almost everyone has an opinion about Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin. Reaction to these two men, in fact, seems nearly as intense today as it was during the eighteenth century. Mather and Franklin have come to symbolize different American cultures, the one allegedly backward-looking, oppressive, and religious, the other forward-looking, liberal, and secular. In such comparisons, Mather usually fares very poorly. He is the

✪ T. H. BREEN is a professor of history and American culture at Northwestern University. His newest book is *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution.*

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kind of historical figure that most modern Americans love to hate. As a champion of Puritanism, he represents bigotry, intransigence, self-righteousness, an unattractive bundle of values that H. L. Mencken, among others, associated with fundamentalism. In contrast to Mather, Franklin possesses the "right stuff." This charming entrepreneur speaks for the Enlightenment, for material progress, for a cosmopolitan mentality that eventually liberated itself from Mather's Calvinism.

These familiar stereotypes may not long survive. Scholars such as Robert Middlekauff, David Levin, Kenneth Silverman, and Sacvan Bercovitch have recently reassessed Mather's relation to the Puritan founders of New England and, among other things, have discovered that he actually attempted to incorporate significant innovations within an established religious framework. To be sure, the new Mather still comes off as something of a self-righteous busybody. But he was also a complex intellectual willing to modify Congregational church government, to accept the presence of Quakers and Baptists in Massachusetts Bay, and to substitute an ornate Augustan rhetoric for the plain style of the Puritan fathers. Though Franklin has not been the object of such critical reevaluation, we are beginning to realize that "Poor Richard" had a darker, more manipulative side, especially in his dealings with women.

Mitchell Breitwieser's book is a welcome addition to this revisionist literature. He not only illuminates in impressive detail the workings of Mather's mind, he also provides a subtle, often provocative reading of Franklin's major writings. On one point, however, Breitwieser is quite traditional. He insists that Mather and Franklin were "representative" personalities, exemplars "of Puritanism and Enlightenment in their American forms."

For the social historian—and this review is written from that perspective—Breitwieser's broad generalizations about the development of colonial American culture hold special appeal. Twenty-five years ago Perry Miller recreated a puritan worldview that he called the New England Mind. In Miller's reading it was an elegant, seamless system of relgious ideas that provided an entire settler society with a divine sense of mission in the New World. According to Miller, some time early in the eighteenth century, this intellectual structure disintegrated, a victim of the region's material success. The very brilliance of Miller's achievement discouraged younger historians from writing about puritanism. There seemed nothing left to do, and it is not surprising that during the 1960s and 1970s, Miller's successors turned to social history that emphasized a close study of local communities. These historians—one thinks of Kenneth Lockridge, Philip Greven, and John Demos—mastered quantitative methodologies. They drew upon insights borrowed from sociology, anthropology, and psychology, and though these social historians did not tell us anything new about puritan ideas, they presented us with a rich understanding of the daily lives of average New England farmers and their families.

Narrowness of focus accompanied technical sophistication. However stimulating these local studies may have been, the social historians clearly retreated from Miller's grand vision of a New England Mind. With each passing year, we discovered that we knew more and more about particular communities, but less and less about puritanism. Humpty Dumpty had taken a great fall, and all the scholars and all their computers could not put him back together again. The problem of fragmentation seemed so serious that a conference of leading colonial historians (Europeans as well as Americans) recently spent several weeks searching for themes—for broad integrating ideas that would allow them once again to advance at least middle-level generalizations about the world of Mather and Franklin.

For Breitwieser, a professor of English at the University of California at Berkeley, the methodological problems confronting historians are of no great concern. His own approach to the study of the past is disarmingly simple. He argues that a careful reading of letters, diaries, and published works can reveal how a Mather or a Franklin consciously defined "self." In other words, Breitwieser is interested not only in how individuals incorporate dominant social and moral imperatives into conceptions of self, but also in how they then manage to communicate those particular selves to contemporaries. For Mather and Franklin this process—the defining and

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presentation of self—constitutes what Breitwieser calls "determining projects." By thoroughly absorbing Puritan or Enlightenment values into their own definition of self, Mather and Franklin were able to persuade others that they were authentic spokesmen for universal Puritan or Enlightenment ideas. It is in this sense that Breitwieser regards these two eighteenth-century personalities as representative men.

If Breitwieser had stopped here, no one would regard his book as particularly original. Fortunately, he offers something more. He suggests, in fact, that the ways in which Mather and Franklin defined self provided these men with analogues for interpreting other kinds of experience. Out of an understanding of self, Breitwieser believes, evolved a rich metaphorical language, a patterning of thought, that determined in large part how Mather and Franklin perceived a complex external world. This is potentially an extremely important insight, for, if Breitwieser is correct, he helps us understand how men like Mather and Franklin may have linked definitions of self to political and scientific analysis and to the writing of history and autobiography—in other words, to activities for which they gained popular acclaim.

Mather regarded the self as a bundle of beguiling temptations. Of these, the sense of being fully in control of one's own life was probably the most dangerous. This involved the sin of pride, for by allowing the self free reign, by taking pleasure from worldly accomplishments such as writing or preaching, the unwary individual turned his or her attention away from God. Like other New England puritans, Mather constantly struggled to gain control over self, to live in the world but not be of it. Without piety, one would surely succumb. It is not surprising, therefore, that much of Mather's huge diary describes his efforts to abase himself before the Lord. Sometimes that required private prayer, fasting, even prostrating himself in the dust on the floor of his study. In his battle against self, Mather drew strength from the founding fathers of Massachusetts Bay. They provided models of exemplary piety. So too did Increase Mather, his own famous father. "For Mather," Breitwieser explains, "personal legitimacy came only from a pious remem-

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brance of divinity as it had embodied itself in the words and acts of those ancestors and predecessors he collectively labeled the fathers."

As anyone familiar with the details of Mather's life knows, the man was not an intransigent defender of tradition. Though he certainly revered the Puritan founders, he also supported cultural and religious changes that Perry Miller claimed undermined the integrity of the New England Mind. Breitwieser provides an imaginative explanation for Mather's willingness to accept innovation. He argues that the great Puritan divine sponsored change only in small, controlled doses. His schemes for reform were actually a kind of homeopathic medicine, an acceptance of little compromises in order to preserve as much of the fathers' piety as possible. According to Breitwieser, Mather's departures from inherited values should be seen as ways "to forestall the excessive extravagance of the times, as the infection artificially induced by inoculation forestalls the mortal infection by nature." This cognitive framework may have suggested to Mather the efficacy of inoculating people for smallpox. His neighbors in Boston—which in the early 1720s included James and Benjamin Franklin—thought Mather was crazy, and one person even tossed a bomb into the minister's house. But Mather stood firm, confident that the methods he had employed to annihilate self and negate social change could also be used to conquer disease.

When Benjamin Franklin left Boston for the more liberal society of Philadelphia, he turned his back on Cotton Mather's entire mental world. The young printer did not view the self as something to be subdued. Instead, it was a legitimate expression of human nature, and, as such, Franklin thought it should be allowed the freedom to design a rational life unencumbered by the burden of piety. Indeed, according to Breitwieser, Franklin soon learned that the kind of pious introspection associated with Mather only diverted consciousness away from the "secular occupations of the self." As anyone who reads his *Autobiography* discovers, Franklin praises calculation, ingenuity, and industriousness. These are not elements to be feared. In fact, they are the self. They govern behavior; they allow the individual to do good works.

The contrast with Mather's definition of self is obvious. For Mather, Breitwieser explains, "the ability to do good was a talent given by God that would be abused if directed by the vigorous self, and the aim of such work was to glorify God and promote the glorification of God by others, rather than to advance secular comfort; for Franklin, however, the self was the admirable locus of a free talent whose works were good if they advanced the general social and physical happiness of himself and of his countrymen, and so attracted acclaim that glorified his ingenuity."

Breitwieser speculates that Franklin's sense of self helps to explain his continuing fascination with electricity. If the self was free, malleable, and rational, then so too was electricity. As Breitwieser declares, "Like electricity moving among the denser matters . . . Franklin's character moves through the departments of a secular world but it is not essentially defined or modified in any of the stages of its motion." The enlightened self may have provided paradigms for Franklin's most daring scientific experiments.

Breitwieser's interpretation strikes me as clever. But as his argument unfolds—the prose style sometimes obscuring the author's purpose—one begins to sense the limits of his approach. What exactly does Breitwieser mean when he calls Mather and Franklin "representative" personalities? To whom were these men "exemplars"? Who cared how they defined self? Breitwieser shows little sympathy for such questions. As he announces in the introductory chapter, he is not particularly concerned with "objective historical description." He distinguishes his approach from that of Kenneth Silverman, Mather's prizewinning biographer. Silverman, in Breitwieser's view, apparently concentrated too heavily upon ephemeral matters, upon "momentary political and social exigencies." Breitwieser instead offers what he terms "an interior excavation of Mather's and Franklin's determining projects," a study of conscious self abstracted from the social and cultural contexts in which these men worked, loved, fought, raised families, suffered disappointments, wrote sermons and diaries. One searches in vain for a discussion of colonial literacy or an analysis of the kinds of men and women who might actually have listened to

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Mather preach. Breitwieser's methodology apparently requires only passing knowledge of the impressive historiography that has appeared over the last two decades, a literature that Jack Greene and J. R. Pole recently described as reflection of a "remarkable renaissance of early American studies."

One might object that this is to criticize Breitwieser for not writing the kind of book that a social or cultural historian might have produced. These methodological problems, however, cannot be so easily dismissed. Take the term *Puritanism* as an example. If Mather is representative of Puritanism, then we are entitled to inquire exactly which Puritanism Breitwieser has in mind. As historians such as David D. Hall, E. Brooks Holifield, and Charles Hambrick-Stowe have demonstrated, there was no Puritan orthodoxy to which all New Englanders subscribed. Rather, during the colonial period, Calvinism was a flexible body of thought, constantly changing, full of possibilities, and, as Holifield observed, "the Puritans were ambidextrous theologians: what the right hand took away, the left hand could retrieve."

Similar difficulties arise when we consider Franklin as a representative of the American Enlightenment. No doubt, many colonial gentlemen shared his rational view of the universe. They may have even applauded his secular analysis of society. But what of the tens of thousands of Americans swept up at mid-century by the Great Awakening? Did the men and women who flocked to Philadelphia to hear the celebrated evangelical preacher George Whitefield see Franklin as an exemplar? Such people regarded deism as anathema, and, if they lionized Franklin, they did so because he hid from them much about his definition of self that they would have found objectionable.

A book that promised to restore a broader vision of colonial society turns out to be an expression of the current concerns of a single academic discipline. Like the social and cultural historians, Breitwieser retreats from Miller's grand intellectual synthesis, and though he presents interesting insights into the conscious workings of two extraordinary minds, in the end, he does not help us to understand the larger mental world in which Mather and Franklin achieved enduring fame.

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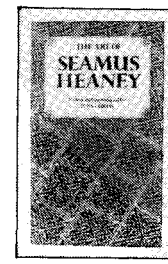

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The Reader Replies

Henry James and *Partisan Review*

May I offer a small amendment to Sidney Hook's article on the history of *Partisan Review* (Winter 1984/85)? The *Partisan* editors did not from the outset include Henry James among their admired writers. In those days all right-thinking people regarded James as "a social twitterer" (period phrase). It was the time of high social consciousness, when Robert Briffault wrote that on hearing Mozart "one wanted to throw open the window." James too was a stuffy indoor man, even though one could find single volumes of the fine "New York Edition" in the outdoor bins of second-hand bookshops—fifty cents apiece.

I take some credit for precipitating a reversal of this almost universal opinion by persuading my colleague and close friend Lionel Trilling to read James at some length. He was converted and he in turn converted Clifton Fadiman and Philip Rahv, each of whom shortly edited an anthology of James's short stories. After that, the deluge.

Jacques Barzun
New York, New York

Louis D. Brandeis Reappraised

While I thoroughly enjoyed Thomas K. McCraw's reappraisal of Louis D. Brandeis in the Autumn 1985 Scholar, I must object to his description of Brandeis as a judge committed to judicial restraint. Superficially, Brandeis may appear as a proponent of restraint because he often dissented in cases where his more conservative brethren ruled reformist legislation unconstitutional. But Brandeis dissented not from a judicial posture based on restraint but because he agreed strongly with the goals of reform legislation. In fact, Brandeis's attachment to sociological jurisprudence and his drive to demonstrate the value of the legislation under attack, both of which are described by McCraw, reflect the orientation of a very activist justice. As Samuel Konefsky, whom McCraw quotes, suggested years ago in *The Legacy of Holmes and Brandeis*, the Social Darwinist Holmes, who refused to interject his views as to the misguided nature of reform legislation into his Court opinions, provides a much more accurate example of judicial restraint.

Robert A. Heineman
Alfred, New York

Thomas K. McCraw replies: Mr. Heineman makes several good points, and there is less to our disagreement than meets the eye. As I noted in my article, Brandeis did sometimes behave as an activist judge, especially in civil liberties cases. In addition, Holmes represents a better example of judicial restraint, as I also implied.

The heart of the matter lies in the meaning of "judicial restraint" in divergent settings. Had different sorts of cases come before the Court during Brandeis's tenure—numerous cases, for example, in which legislatures prohibited regulatory authority rather than promoting it, as they actually did—then Brandeis *might* have shown more activism in trying to curb legislative power. In this Mr. Heineman may be correct. Yet his argument is based on counterfactual assumptions: history could have gone the other way, in which case Brandeis would have exhibited little restraint. Since history did not in fact go that way, there is no way to prove or disprove such an argument.

The larger question remains Brandeis's conception of the institutional role of the Court: that, within in the American constitutional system, judicial power must be limited. Courts must refrain from undue interference with the prerogatives of legislatures. Brandeis's actual record on that point, as opposed to some hypothetical one, could hardly be any clearer.

All in the Family

In his article "All in the Family: A Psychobiography of the Adams Family" (Autumn 1985), Peter Shaw would have one believe that the "family" sprang full-blown from the head of John Adams (1735–1826) like Athena from the head of Zeus. In

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fact, the Adams family in America began with Henry, who came to New England in 1634 to live in Braintree, Massachusetts, with his wife and children. He was progenitor of a line of farmers that continued for one hundred years before John, and in parallel lines continued for another one hundred years. John descended from Henry's seventh son, Joseph, I from his fourth son, Edward. The aberration in the John line derived either from the marriage of John's father, also John, a farmer, to Susanna Boylston of a Brookline family prominent in religious circles, or from the effect of the break from the farming tradition by John, who, by the way, was intended for the ministry. Whether from Boylston heredity, or from the effect of city environment, the particular line departed from the family norm, both to its credit and to its undoing. To generalize that this particular deviation is an Adams family norm of mind, when a dozen other Adams lines derived from the same source seemingly lacked it, is to strain one's credulity.

A. B. Savage
Midland, Michigan

Peter Shaw replies: A. B. Savage is quite right in pointing out that I, in common with other cultural historians, have singled out but one out of several possible Adams lines. His own line may be closest to the family norm, as he claims, but he himself seems to share the cantankerous family pride that I concentrated on.

A Feminist History

I write as a historian and as a woman to express appreciation to G. R. Elton for his scholarly discussion of Joan Kelly's *Women, History and Theory* (Autumn 1985). The article is welcome indication that the field of history has not been turned over entirely to feminists and other ideologues producing pseudo-history that promotes their particular causes.

The current uncritical acceptance of feminist history as valid portrayal of the past damages the historical profession as a whole and is especially detrimental to those historians who are women. The status of history itself is damaged by the profession's acceptance of work passed off as history which lacks such basic scholarly requirements as intellectual integrity and respect for factual evidence. The status of women historians is damaged by the indulgent assumption of incompetence that is implicit in the exemption of women, or a large group of them, from compliance with the generally accepted standards of historical scholarship.

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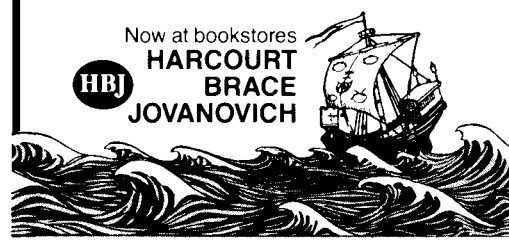

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MATTIE ERMA E. PARKER
Raleigh, North Carolina

* * *

Professor Elton's review of Joan Kelly's *Women, History and Theory* contains many criticisms about which reasonable people can disagree. This makes particularly unfortunate the placing of his critique within a framework that can only be judged offensive and inflammatory. What is to be gained by dubbing a deceased colleague "Saint Joan" or by implying that her death by cancer was "charismatic"? Is the process of historical dialogue advanced by slandering feminism as a religion—when even Tories can undergo conversion experiences such as those Professor Elton considers to be peculiar to the politics of feminism? Does Professor Elton really wish to be considered a supporter of women's history when he uses condescending language ("It will be interesting to see whether women's history has grown up . . .") and betrays his ignorance by misnaming one of the foremost scholars in the field (Gerda, not Gilda, Lerner)? Because this review was calculated to delight anti-feminists and anger feminists, it only serves to set back the process of integrating the histories of women and men. I hope Professor Elton joins me in regretting the counterproductive effect of his review.

JUDITH M. BENNETT
Assistant Professor of History
The University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

G. R. ELTON replies: There is always some melancholy satisfaction when the totally predictable happens. Professor Bennett confirms my apprehensions about feminist history. I am, of course, sorry that my review of Joan Kelly's book made her angry; if it offended and inflamed her it can, I suppose, be called offensive and inflammatory, neither of which I was trying to be. However, I wish she would read with eyes not dimmed by anger. I did not call conversion experience "peculiar to the politics of feminism"; on the contrary, I was amazed to find how completely Joan Kelly's description of her discovery of feminist history fitted the category of conversion experiences. It is not I but Professor Bennett who thinks an ascription of religious feelings slanderous. As for integrating the histories of women and men, the history of humanity has long since managed to attend to both kinds of human beings. It is the disintegration of this entity by feminist historians that one must regret.

* * *

G. R. Elton's review of the essays of Joan Kelly is so contaminated by passion that it makes one wonder what the standards for informed discussion have become in the pages of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Elton dismisses Kelly's work by ridiculing feminist history as a religion where only women's experience counts and with "the purpose of today substituting female dominance for male." He appears unaware of the diversity and substance of feminist history in France, England, Italy, and the United States (among other countries) and is a hostile reader of Kelly's text itself.

Kelly's essays represent a particular moment in the development of women's history: the search for a conceptual framework for thinking about the history of the relations between women and men. The book was not intended as a practical guide for research—others have done that—but as a provocative exploration of how the study of gender might change our understanding of periodization, class, and state building. (Kelly even provoked Elton to ask some interesting questions about chastity, humanist education, and women's work [pp. 552 and 554]).

Rather than reinforcing "rigorous preconceptions," Kelly's work has stimulated much new archival digging and differing interpretations of early modern European history. Rather than substituting female dominance for male, she pointed out that the changing status of women was integrally related to the new dependency of elite men on the Renaissance prince.

Interestingly, the tone of Joan Kelly's work is always suggestive, cognizant of the difficulty of the task of making the relation of the sexes one of history's central threads. What a revealing contrast to the condescending and arrogant tone of Dr. Elton's review, which would rather insult than confront the issues raised.

NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS
Henry Charles Lea Professor of History
Princeton University

JOAN W. SCOTT
Professor, School of Social Science
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

G. R. ELTON replies: I am gratified to have drawn the fire of some big guns from the ranks of specialists in women's history; I am also not surprised,

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though a trifle saddened, to find them so unthinkingly passionate about the issues I tried to raise. I did not ridicule feminist history as a religion (a set of beliefs); everything about the volume I reviewed forced that recognition upon me, and it would better become such eminent scholars if they brought themselves to read the introductory chapters and Kelly's own account of her discovery of women's history with an open mind. Even if "the search for a conceptual framework" represented a sound approach to the problems of historical research, one is entitled to expect less simplistic, indeed less naive, lines of thought than those offered by Kelly. Her so-called framework does not embody an acceptable way for treating the historical evidence—and that remark springs from what I know about the past, not from a nonexistent prejudice against women. The "interesting questions" which Kelly allegedly provoked me to ask have been in the minds of historians for much longer than the present passion for women's history. My chief regret concerns the determined passion with which practitioners of that genre refuse to recognize serious work that does not fly the approved flag. For the rest I see no point in trading insults with experts at that game.

Huckleberry Finn & Its Critics

J. C. Furnas in his article in the Autumn 1985 issue twits "underprivileged" readers of *Huckleberry Finn* "who are uncertain about who Mrs. Judith Loftus was," and urges them to do some rereading.

A little rereading, especially of the Judith Loftus chapter, would spare Mr. Furnas some of his puzzlement about why Jim set off down the Mississippi with Huck, instead of merely swimming across to Illinois. When Huck, ineptly disguised as a girl, paddles over to St. Petersburg "to find out what was going on," he learns from Mrs. Loftus that there is a reward of three hundred dollars for Jim's capture, as the suspected murderer of Huck, and that in a few hours her husband and another man, armed with guns, are going to Jackson's Island to try to earn it. So Huck hurries back, wakes Jim with "There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!" and they hastily depart in their raft (which of course can only travel downstream).

Easily as the charge of murder could have been refuted (assuming that Jim's pursuers were patient enough to listen to argument), Huck and Jim know that he is subject to capture as a fugitive slave. "All he had to do the first dark night," Mr. Furnas writes, "was to catch a drift log and swim to the free-soil Illinois shore," and thinks that "he has some such intention." In fact, Jim's (frustrated) intention, the night he ran off, had been to hitch a ride on a raft, swim to the Illinois shore twenty-five miles farther down (Mr. Furnas omits this last detail), where presumably the news of his disappearance would not yet have arrived, and then "take to de woods." With the passage of time, this plan becomes less feasible.

Why did Jim need to take to the woods in "free-soil Illinois"? Mr. Furnas overlooks the fact that there was no "free soil" anywhere in the United States for runaway slaves—hence the ultimate destination of the underground railroad was Canada. Even if the Fugitive Slave Law had not been enacted at the supposed time of the story, the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution applied to the whole of the Union, and slave owners had the right forcibly to retrieve any runaway slave from any state. True, if an owner voluntarily allowed his slave to enter a "free state," the slave might have a case for refusing to return—there was much antebellum litigation about this, culminating in the Dred Scott decision—but not if he were a runaway.

Generally, of course, the greater the distance the fugitive placed between himself and his owner, the safer he might be. But Huck and Jim—and apparently Mark Twain—were naive in thinking that if Jim traveled up the Ohio to other "free states," he would "then be out of trouble," as Huck puts it. He might perhaps have been given shelter by a friendly abolitionist. But if, as he planned, he had tried to buy his wife out of slavery, he would have risked disclosing his whereabouts and becoming susceptible to recapture.

DONALD GREENE
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

J. C. FURNAS replies: That problem of Jim's escape plans is knotty, which is probably why so many let it roll to the outfield.

Professor Greene is right, of course, that, though formally free-soil, Illinois had its slave catchers and was otherwise largely inhospitable to runaway slaves. But it also had a branch of the Underground Railroad, and now and again a runaway from Missouri or Kentucky did succeed in gaining freedom through its territory. Runaways also sometimes made it to free-soil Iowa only sixty-odd crow flight miles from "St. Petersburg/Hannibal; thanks in part to Quaker settlers, Iowa, too, had a tidy little UGRR. With very good luck Jim could have swum to the Illinois shore to frustrate dog tracking; traveled northward through the woods and swum across to the right bank again at some well-chosen point; and made it over the Iowa border. Illinois and Iowa both probably offered better chance of successful escape than Huck's harebrained scheme of taking Jim up the Ohio in a steamboat. For background in

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these matters—which Professor Greene may well not need—see my *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* (1956), chapter "The North Star."

That Jim knew enough of all this to help him in his planning must be unlikely. But in my view, merely to say that commits the error of applying commonsensical terms to freewheeling episodes in *Huckleberry Finn*. For "the text[,] the implausibilities, consistencies and anomalies alike come of Mark Twain's glorious improvisations, which are as impromptu and neglectful of thinking through as Jim's decision to run away from Miss Watson." Other examples: The author's forgetting to have Colonel Sherburn hark back to his ultimatum when shooting Boggs; and that inexplicable rigmarole about Mary Jane Wilks's candle in the window. Mark Twain himself couldn't make sense of that passage if he came back now to see Halley's comet again.

Anyway we can at least agree that the book is an important subject.

Everybody's Talking at Me

Aristides' essay entitled "Everybody's Talking at Me" in the Autumn 1985 SCHOLAR delightfully detailed the trials and treasures of lecturing. I think Aristides would appreciate the following disaster.

As a twenty-five-year-old humanities student on the apprehensive verge of entering a doctoral program, I jump, for the sake of experience, at the opportunity to lecture. Fortunately, my Phi Beta Kappa key frequently earns me the "up-and-coming young scholar" status at many a women's club luncheon. For example, I was recently the keynote speaker at an octogenarian club's monthly meeting. Having successfully survived the seemingly endless succession of reports by the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, social events coordinator, and neighborhood dogcatcher, my time to perform had come. I approached the rostrum and, to assuage my nervousness, carefully laid out my security blanket of note cards. (Like Aristides, I experience "butterflies" before lecturing; my metamorphosis into Aristides' "moth" stage of public speaking nervousness will undoubtedly come with age.) Then, just as I began to speak, an eighty-nine-year-old woman in the back row stumbled to her feet, grasped her chest, and struggled desperately to catch her breath. Friends in the audience immediately rushed the woman to the hospital. With the woman safely in transit, we attempted to continue the meeting. I quickly gathered my thoughts and again tried to begin my lecture. This time, directly before me in the front row, a woman of enormous dimensions exploded with a sonorous and near deafening snore. The excitement surrounding the near heart attack had evidently had a most slumberous effect. Thus, without uttering a solitary word, I had already put one woman to sleep and had nearly killed another!

The sage who first warned "to expect the unexpected" was undoubtedly a veteran lecturer.

THEODORE D. PAPPAS
Rockford, Illinois

Portrait of a Young Physician

By way of the "Hawthorne Effect" anything investigated is liable to influence by the investigation itself. The subject studied is susceptible to deviation from its natural course simply because it is being studied. Even peering over one's shoulder is apt to alter one's behavior. This is an axiom well known to biomedical investigators.

There is—or should be—another axiom which, so far as I know, has yet no eponym: whatever is tampered with by a psychologist develops psychologically related quirks. I am suggesting that poor David, the disturbed young physician portrayed by Professor Howard Stein in the Autumn 1985 SCHOLAR, might not be so tormented had he and his medical contemporaries not been subjected to such psychologic scrutiny, albeit I am sure with only benign intent.

I am not a young physician, but I can testify that my generation of practitioners dealt with much the same problems as David. We coped and achieved a degree of equanimity—we just didn't make such a fuss.

WILLIAM S. HAUBRICH, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Scripps Clinic
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